CAMEOS OF A CHINESE CITY

MARY DARLEY

建甌城

KIEN-NING CITY

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CAMEOS OF A CHINESE CITY

A BEAD-TELLING TEMPLE WOMAN.

CAMEOS OF A CHINESE CITY

By
MARY DARLEY
Author of "The Light of the Morning"

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To

A. K. D.

In glad memory of her visit to Kien-Ning in 1915, and to all others who, from afar, are also fully sharing in this work, and in the blessing which is graciously bestowed upon it.

PREFACE

THOSE who have read the *Light of the Morning*, a description of earlier work in Kien-Ning prefecture by the same authoress, will warmly welcome the present volume. I have had the privilege of reading this book in MS., and if all readers are as fascinated as I was, the circulation ought to be very large. To appreciate what God has done in this prefecture, the earlier book should be first carefully read. The introduction to that book gives some interesting statistics. I subjoin a few similar figures to date :—

Communicants	557
Baptized Christians . (1902) 193 ; (1917)	1,004
Places of worship throughout the prefecture .	30
Schools, Day and Boarding	8
Chinese Pastors in full orders . . .	2

Figures often convey but a partial and sometimes incorrect impression of the real facts ; but the life gems here set forth, in their striking and most informing background of social conditions and customs, speak vividly of the Master's power, and witness to the contribution these from the land of Sinim are bringing to Christ's Holy Church throughout the world, and in infinite variety manifest the glory of the King. In these dark times, when the world so disappoints, these cameos of the kingdom will surely be a real

refreshment to many a wearied child of God. They will inspire to greater courage in our world-wide task, besides drawing out new sympathy, work and prayer for this district.

As will be gathered, much ground is still to be possessed, and there is much in the work one could wish otherwise. Still, in comparison with years gone by, the door is wide open indeed. The fight is not lost. "The battle is the Lord's."

HUGH STOWELL PHILLIPS
ARCHDEACON OF KIEN-NING.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I	A very "Old China" City	9
II	Our House Friends	28
III	Mi-seng	39
IV	Things that Happen in Heathen China	50
V	Unloved and Not Wanted	57
VI	Birds, each with a Broken Wing	66
VII	Transformation	76
VIII	More of the Children and their Ways	84
IX	Women Workers and their Work	93
X	From Seed-time to Harvest	104
XI	Some Light in a Dark Place	112
XII	Guang-seng	120
XIII	Lepers and their Joy	128
XIV	Out in the Villages	139
XV	"Unto Old Age and Grey Hairs"	148
XVI	"Fasting Grand mothers"	157
XVII	Heathenism in Kien-Ning	167
XVIII	Sunday in Kien-Ning City	183
XIX	From Church to Church in Kien-Ning Counties	193
XX	"Pure Brightness" in the Spring	205

NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION

au	pronounced	almost	as	ow as in how
ai	,,	,,	,,	igh ,, ,, sigh
ua	,,	,,	,,	wah
ia	,,	,,	,,	yah
iu	,,	,,	,,	you
io	,,	,,	,,	yor
ue	,,	,,	,,	were
ie	,,	,,	,,	eea
iau	,,	,,	,,	iau as in miau
uai	,,	,,	,,	wye
uoi	,,	,,	,,	ooey
ang	,,	,,	,,	an
eng	,,	,,	,,	ane
ong	,,	,,	,,	ong as in song
ing	,,	,,	,,	een ,, ,, seen
aing	,,	,,	,,	ine ,, ,, line
iang	,,	,,	,,	yan
iong	,,	,,	,,	yon
uing	,,	,,	,,	ooing as in doing
uong	,,	,,	,,	wong
uaing	,,	,,	,,	wine

CAMEOS OF A CHINESE CITY

CHAPTER I.

A VERY "OLD CHINA" CITY.

"All things are full of labour; . . . The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing."—*Eccles.* i. 8, 9.

MANY Chinese cities are now open to the influence of the West, which, by instilling hygienic principles, has apparently worked miracles in many parts of Old China. But Kien-Ning cannot be said to be among them.

Of late years she has tried to emerge from some of her primitive ways, but her efforts are feebly spasmodic, and few are being sustained. So we have no macadamized roads, broad and good to walk on; neither have we water laid on, nor fine electric lighting —but we have a quaint and dear old city, content to remain "Old China"; abounding in picturesque beauty, arches, street views, gate-ways,—colour and pictures everywhere.

The streets are not provided with footpaths; comers and goers, courteous and leisurely, can, without any rule-of-the-road, walk and not jostle each other. But sometimes a need arises for a footpath as when load-bearers and sedan-chair coolies, taking the centre as their right, force pedestrians, with scant ceremony, to seek a door-step refuge.

The cobble-stone pavement is not at all kind to feet wearing leather boots, but newly-come leather must accept what is and has been from time immemorial; the cobbles were laid for cloth-soled shoes and they two fully agree.

Possibly most of the streets measure some twelve feet across, and these, when parallel one to the other, are connected by narrow lanes, many about as wide as the length of a well-grown pig—a comparison drawn from the following incident.

The steps of "Golden Thread" lane lead to a road on a higher level. One day, just half-way up, a huge black pig stood in full possession, rubbing her nose against one wall, and, with her ridiculously little tail, idly tickling the other, fixed in her attitude and too uninviting for a white-coated person to pass at close quarters. Fortunately, at this minute, an elderly gentleman appeared from above, wearing a garment of pale grey silk, and he also stood to consider.

An impromtu tableau vivant!

With grave politeness, he bowed, and said, "The honourable sister's way impeded by a pig-mother, truly extremely unfitting." Whereupon he closed his paper fan, and with it flicked the obstructer, who, taking the hint, was prepared to move when she was ordered in loud tones of command to "Speedily for the honourable sister open a very wide way." She could not do less. Then the silk-coated gentleman and honourable sister changed their respective places, and he from below and she from above looked over the pig between them, and gravely bowed to each other!

The rose-coloured glasses of those who love this city best are not sufficiently rosy to show her as "clean and tidy," but should they so describe her in play of imagination, another of the senses would immediately

protest. It is enough to say that the summer might hold considerably more sickness and death if the heavens did not occasionally move, and with mighty torrential rains flood her out even to the corners with rains which, in a few moments, turn some streets into flowing streams, where the small open drains at their sides are wholly unable to cope with so great an inrush of water.

The shopmen of Old China do not usually display their wares temptingly finished and ready for sale, but allow customers to see them in process of making. So furniture shops are attractive places with wide open fronts, showing carpenters at work and men engaged upon fretwork carving, or the more beautiful chiselled work, bold in design and also fine, for the tools they use are of excellent steel, though strangely few and primitive.

In sewing-silk shops it is pretty to see masses of raw, soft silk being spun into shining thread, on old-time wooden spinning wheels. Embroiderers generally apprentice lads, who work out wonderful dragon patterns in unstinted gold-thread and silk on frames stretched, bright-coloured satin. Silversmiths not a few, with crucible, hammer and anvil, make and mend small jewellery trinkets, all in full view, and alas! in surroundings quite indescribably grimy! Tailors and apprentices stitch at trestle tables. Cap-makers fit caps on their wooden block-heads. There are also makers of paper umbrellas, paper lanterns, and various paper idolatries. Pewter is fashioned into lamps, candlesticks, teapots and jugs, and paraffin oil tins into tin utensils of every kind. These and many other things are for passers-by to see, in process of construction, from beginning to completion. So shop-gazing here gives gratuitous educa-

tion. In contrast to these are the "South Capital" shops, containing a wide assortment of goods, not of necessity made in Kien-Ning, yet all that is prized in China, from the south to Pekin, is sold at the owner's valuation, which gives rise to the saying, "Of as uncertain a price as is asked in South Capital Shops." Of late these have been filled with cheap foreign things, much to their disadvantage.

There are thirty-six classes of shops in this city, and each class has a line of signboard wording peculiar to itself, while the shops have not only signboards but also ornamental inscriptions, extolling their merits and inviting attention. These, in gold or black characters on black or red lacquered scrolls, give pleasing richness of colour. The signboard titles are highly suggestive.

"Lasting Peace Hall," "Happy Springtime Hall," are two of the finest medicine shops, displaying bottles of divers hues, with contents for the curing of every ill.

And whose vanity could resist the barber's alluring prospect? "Reformed Appearance. Harmoniously Fragrant"!

Then what comfort and style is offered for feet, fitted, assuredly to perfection, at "Deer Race Beauty" shoe shop!

Perhaps carpenters have more right than many to announce themselves boldly as "Empire's Venerable Greatness"; but surely a very far flight of fancy is expressed in the titles of two food shops: "Rivalling (the) Fairies' Upper Abode," "Surpassing a Place of Orchids." Food and cake shops are very numerous, where cooks at stoves, well in evidence, make their delectable things in public with skill and speed. There are portable stoves as well, on which every day,

all over the city, cakes, refreshments and sweets are made and readily sold.

Time and sense of humour are almost necessary adjuncts to a shopping expedition. One very seldom finds the shopmen of "Old China" shewing to their customers the least desire to sell; as a rule, their manner is unconcerned and wholly condescending. A would-be buyer presents a petition and receives immediate attention, but the thing required will not be offered until a little play has been acted to the salesman's satisfaction. The customer asks for the best and he produces the worst; then, slowly, by mounting the scale of degrees, "the best" may be forthcoming. One day at "Heaven's First-Silk-Satin Shop," two of us tried to procure a particular shade of mauve silk, and as a preliminary, somewhat unnecessary, stated exactly what we wanted in kind and measure and cost. Now the man knew (a fact then unknown to us) that his shop contained but a remnant and not the required amount—a fact which in process of time, by a method involving patient toil, he meant to impart to us.

"Silk, mauve colour, yes, mauve coloured silk I have. See"—gently unwrapping out of grey linen a beautiful roll of pink satin. "Not do! again must look"—and returning with a purple sateen. "You only want mauve? What kind of silk? Just like that white you say; well, white will you buy? You only want mauve?"—whereupon he saunters away, while we wait and wonder what next. In due time he returns with a very large bundle, from which he selects a pale blue muslin, and silently spreads it out. "Still you say mauve, not flowered mauve?" Then in a tone of injured surprise, "Flowered mauve I can find, but plain without flowers this shop has

not. You tell me to look for plain mauve ; am I not very much looking ? " and, proving the words by his action, he arrays in leisurely fashion a rich blue, a pale blue and lastly a pile of silk remnants, the sought-for plain mauve amongst them ! " Yes, you asked for ten feet of that, but that is only one foot and a half, the end of last year's piece, and now there is no more."

There are other classes of shops where an opposite attitude may be experienced. Not long ago in " Scissor's Alley," in one of six scissor shops, we were choosing from numbers of pairs laid on the counter before us. While so engaged a woman appeared and calmly moved them aside, remarking at the same time in tones of surprised reproof, " How did you not know to come to my shop ? Now, leave these alone, and follow me. *I* have only the best." She swept away our objections, as she had swept off the scissors ; then pleasantly ordered the shopman to hang them up on the nails from which, for our inspection, they had been taken down. He, well acquainted with the lady, obeyed without a word ; but much against her will we interposed and bought two pairs.

In triumph she placed before us scissors of best and second-best quality, scissors large and small. " Under the heavens," she said, " where are such as these ? "

When our purchase was quite completed, she stamped her shop-sign on every pair, tied them together and gave them to us, remarking in pleased satisfaction, " Now you will know to distinguish good scissors. All over the world look out for my sign, and never again buy scissors elsewhere."

For fascination, aggravation, with some entertainment, go to Curio Street, where as birds of a feather

there flock together no less than six little shops. These are filled to their doors and even beyond with presses, tables, chairs and stools, old and comparatively new, plain and ornamental. Within, on tiers of narrow shelves, on the counter and everywhere else, are brass and bronze censers, candlesticks, vases, pipes, brasiers, and idols; natural tree roots, fantastically carved into fairies, figures and ornaments; pewter vessels of many kinds, principally monster candlesticks, over two feet in height; china and crockery vases, large and small, coarse and fine, in colouring crude or lovely; screens of hideously painted metal or china, mounted in finely carved stands; weapons of various sorts, daggers, spikes and swords, hanging up overhead; scrolls by the dozen in all spare corners; and under the tables and on them many large wooden and leather boxes—and even now the list is not exhausted. The proprietor of the largest store is very well known to us all as a friendly, crafty, wily old salesman. With a vivid imagination, and no regard at all for truth, he pours forth streams of unmeasured praise upon his "ancient" wares, only pausing to give with effect a long-drawn "Āh!" "See this censer" (plainly new, and possibly worth a dollar). "Āh! centuries in the possession of a country family; your eyes are bright; they can recognize value. Āh! to you I am willing to sell it privately and at a loss—only five dollars. Āh! and you may take it home." We smile and remark that his "words are playful," whereupon, in pity for our ignorance, he sighs heavily, and replaces the censer. But he notes the direction of our eyes, and whatever he thinks we are looking at is brought forward at once, with an "Āh!" "On this vase, what flowers! what colours! Āh! to you, only ten

dollars. Did it not cost me more ?" "Ten dollars !" we exclaim in surprise. "Why, for that we would give but one !" "For one, the vase is now yours," he replies without hesitation or sign of elation in the success of a common ruse.

He usually likes to return a visit, so before many days have passed, heralded by an "Āh !" we find him gazing in admiration at the things we had noticed in his shop, now set out upon our verandah floor to good advantage. "Āh !"

There is less variety and more exaggeration in the remarks we hear of ourselves every time we go out. Some quite obviously true, and other the very reverse.

"They walk very quickly." "Are never tired." "Have been here tens of years." "Sickness of all kinds they can heal." "Because they drink milk their skins are white." "Books they very much read and teach." "Preaching their doctrine everywhere."

When feeling intensely the extremes of summer or winter weather, we receive no sympathy :—

"Do not fear cold." "Wear no wadded coat." "Mind no heat." "Need not use a fan."

"Cold ! they cold, oh, no ; foreigners, under their coats, wear body-suits of black velvet." "Sadness or sickness they do not know." "Add a few years in China, and their eyes will slowly darken." "Foreigners' ages none can know, at eighty they match our forty."

Sometimes our vanity may be wounded. "Hair not smooth, they never dress it. Ours all black, theirs uncertain in colour and frightful." "Noses long and different to ours." "Feet very large, but good for walking."

It is not considered impertinent, but both friendly and polite, to question mutually and say a few words to those who, as strangers, we pass on the road. Each is addressed according to general appearance in years, as "Old person," "Aunt," "Sister-in-law," "Elder" or "Younger sister."

"Old person, where are you going?"

"Going there," she replies, and a tilt of her chin indicates the direction she faces.

"And you, Elder sisters, where are you going?"

"Going there," we say, with the same suggestive chin-pointing. Or perhaps the question may be, "Aunt, from where do you come?" and the answer, "From that place," given with a turn of the head, is equally explicit. Often it seems sufficient to ask whether we each have eaten breakfast, dinner or supper, the time at the moment deciding the meal to be mentioned.

We part as wise as we were before, but the gain of friendly exchange has a value of its own. Now and then this preliminary greeting leads to more, and we stand for a minute and invite the stranger to our house, where "Good News" will be heard.

One day when walking up a steep street, I overtook a dear old lady, aged about eighty, toiling along with the help of a long ornamental stick, such as the ancient use. Together we slowly walked to the top, and there she stood and said, "Old person, your happiness is very great: you need no stick, you grow not old, I, old and no use, grow older and older."

Conservative Kien-Ning owns a Chinese Post Office with uniformed and excellent postmen. They walk quickly as befits their office, and enter our houses with the air of men assured they are always welcome, especially so when they bring in a mail from home,

broadly smiling and announcing, "From England, very many!" Pleasant, kindly men they are, ready to serve in over-measure, for, besides bringing us letters, they take away ours to post.

One day, particularly wishing our letters should be in time, we asked our special postman friend the length of his further round, thinking it might perhaps be wiser to send direct to the office. "To-day you need not trouble," he said. "In delivering these my other letters I will quickly, quickly run, and then it is almost certain that yours will not be late."

Knowing how averse to change this city has always been, perhaps the fact of foreign missionaries living peacefully in it is a miracle, second only in wonder to that of Chinese hearts and homes brought from heathenism to Christianity; and it may be the people know very well that the result of established mission work is entirely good for their city.

From 1863 to 1884 attempts were made, under Archdeacon Wolfe's direction, by Chinese workers from Ku-tien, to occupy Kien-Ning city. These all failed, and were ended by riots. Twice within its walls property was bought, but each time it was violently torn from the Mission. And now it is interesting to remember that the original house of this Compound was re-bought after an interval of twenty years, and as a memorial to the Rev. J. S. Collins, from a man, then in Church employment, whose heathen father died in prison from ill-usage, inflicted in revenge for his selling property to the foreigners. When in 1903 our own little home was built beside it, these two houses became the centre of all the city women's work, until in 1906 the Women's Hospital, as C.M.S. work, was moved to its own new quarters. But the original C.E.Z. house was only

OUR WISTARIA-COVERED HOME.

A MULTITUDE OF HOUSES.

a valued resting place until more suitable premises could be secured, for both it and our home were joined on three sides to the walls of other houses, and were therefore too airless and restricted to contemplate as a permanent centre for a developing work. Our need of improved accommodation was no sooner made known at home, than it met with such a God-blessed response, that in 1911–1912 we were enabled to buy first one and then another of the adjoining houses. That the owners were willing to sell seemed at the time a miracle. Over ten families lived in each, and when we came into possession the families flitted one by one, as is the custom in this city, at dead of night. A fortune-teller decides the moment, when there shall emerge from the front door a quaint procession of old and young, men, women and children, who set off with torches and paper-lanterns to walk to the new abode, where, as they light the first fire at daybreak, they conduct a regular ceremony, letting off crackers, and burning incense, inviting the idols, "moved" with themselves, to accept the change with favour and still continue protection. When the departures had taken place (a matter of several weeks), one old lady refused to leave, declaiming in fine spirit, "I am here for as long as I wish to be here. If with hard hearts you urge me to go, your words will be emptily spoken, and I become your enemy here in this world, in the world to come, and for ever and ever." It is well to add that we parted eventually as excellent friends.

Our property was so appallingly dirty, so altogether unfitting, that no process of adaptation would have been successful, so together with the original house it was all pulled down, and from the ruins and mainly with the old materials a good and most work-

able centre was built, at a cost of less than £800. The two years of re-builiding left a memory of dust and noise and falling walls, old, old earth walls, either as hard as cement, or crumbling into decay, ready to tumble in great, brittle pieces with the removal of any support; of mountainous piles of whole and broken flagstones and tiles, of smoke-blackened roof-beams and boardings, and wood of every description; good ornamental carving, screens and doors in abundance, and many fine pillars on their stone-cut bases. And a memory, too, of vigilant watching, as out of the chaos there slowly evolved an ordered plan of building, in the hands of a set of friendly men, who smiled when their scamping was discovered, and re-scamped with unwearying zest for what might or might not escape detection. When finished and ready for occupation, past toil mattered little in the lasting enjoyment of "Something accomplished and done."

In gratitude for a need supplied, the words that rang long in our hearts were, as the refrain of a pleasant song—"Given graciously, generously, freely!" Now, at the Compound entrance gate, there is at once a delightful sense of open space and quiet. Then by a road leading past our Church, the Women's and Day Schools, we come to our own little home which stands in the centre of all, with a fine scroll text over its door, announcing to those who wait to read that "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous." Up from here by a covered-way, we go to the Children's Home, to our blind and crippled family, the Home which is known in Chinese wording as "Heart's Light Girls' School."

The Church is, as we longed it should be, a house of worship, prayer and praise, assuredly helping every

SUI-AING AND HIS FAMILY.

one here towards a holier living. The cool grey walls, the high oak-stained roof, the chancel with three narrow stained-glass windows, amber, rich red and blue, the carved screen doors at each side—that on the right to the vestry, the other to a small hall and side-door never locked—all help a quiet, reverent worship which was not given here before.

A fine big drill-hall, built at one side of the Blind School, is wholly useful in summer and winter as a playground for the children, a place for entertainments, and for receiving heathen guests who occasionally come in large numbers. In holiday time the children are quiet through the hot day, but revive in the evening and make it a kind of concert hall, where the music is only tuneful in that it bespeaks an abundance of irrepressible glad content! Sometimes the elder girls may be seen marching between the pillars, singing their favourite hymns, or, if in exuberant spirits, their beloved Christmas carols, the little ones following in their train with bugles and "music toys."

The special charm of this Compound is in its family life, with less perhaps of a school régime on the children's side and more of a home-like freedom, as it is in term and holiday time both home and school in one. Two members of the household attend to the welfare of all the rest—one, our own cook Cheng-mi, of whom we shall hear later; and the other, the loyal-minded Siu-Aing, faithful steward of the premises, a good and upright man, who, in his kindness of heart, shares the burden of the Compound and the burdens of all who are in it. Years back he came to us with his mother, weakened by adverse circumstances and stress of misfortune, and with illness in body and mind. Both were at the point of starvation. Now

she is at rest, and he, with his wife and child live in a house at our entrance gate, with one desire, often expressed, to "spend a saved life to the glory of God."

All our six centres are built away from the lower streets, and each apart from the other by a few minutes' walk. Two of these Compounds belong to the C.E.Z.M.S.; this one and the Girls' Boarding School, moved from Ciong-Bau, in 1916, to a new and excellent building. It is planned for eighty pupils, and stands on over two acres of land—a garden-like place with its trees and palms; an ideal school in an ideal setting, good for the children's minds and bodies, for play as well as for work.

Of the four remaining Compounds, one is our pastor's private house, built in a semi-foreign fashion, which, as the Chinese say, is unrivalled by any other in "convenience" for work and living. Its guest hall is seen to best advantage when filled with men of all ages, learning to read their Bibles—a weekly class begun and led by Mrs. Phillips.

Then there are C.M.S. institutions—the men's and women's Hospitals, each of the utmost value all over the Kien-Ning prefecture in the history of mission work, and the Boys' Boarding School, ever potentially full of promise for the Church in later years. The school stands away from the streets and near to a former parade-ground, once used by mandarins, and now the boys' joy for out-of-door games and ours for fresh-air walking.

Then, although no foreigner lives there, the City Church may also count as making a seventh centre.

We have cause to say in humble, deep thanksgiving, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." And oh, that with ever-increas-

ing insistence, "the voice of rejoicing and salvation," may ring out most clearly from each.

"Kien-Ning's seven counties, and six walled cities" are words very often upon our lips in prayer and in praise.

A summer spent in Kien-Ning city, alone with the family in this Compound, gives a unique opportunity in which to make a few pen and ink sketches of the women and children, with some filling-in touches descriptive of everyday life, not taken in the heat of day, the time of stirring fulness, but in late evening's measure of coolness, when children's voices have stilled in sleep and quietness rules. Then there is pleasure in settling to work at a trestle-table, placed on an unroofed balcony, built out from our upper verandah.

At times a sense of vastness demands cessation of work, to enjoy the awe of a glorious sky, where the moon holds sway in cloudless expanse, and a host of innumerable stars gleam and scintillate. The night, sweet with the scent of tuberose, and oleander, is full of mysterious beauty. Fire-flies gleam as they dart from tree to tree, and white flowers, like rays of pure light, brighten the shadowy places. Then the myriad voices of the night fill the air, as wind in the trees, with a chorus-rush of sound. We, in dullness of human hearing, can distinguish but few of the notes—the "zizzing" of mosquitoes and cicadas in their shrill persistence, the sudden cheeping of wakeful birds, and, as bass to these, the deep-toned croak of frogs in a sacred pond close by. But do they not all ascend in one harmonious blending of song to the Maker of living things?

"The heavens declare the glory of God: . . . and night unto night showeth knowledge."

With "Everything that hath breath. . . . Praise ye the Lord."

But writing in such an environment is not entirely pleasant, for the necessary lamp attracts minute life in hundreds and thousands and millions, often sufficient to extinguish its light and force the distracted writer to find peace by removing the lamp and lazily rest without it, until refreshed and sleepy enough to slumber through the hottest night into the glorious dawn of a summer morning.

Here in Kien-Ning city, from April to October, the thermometer registers in the shade a daily maximum of 80° to 100°. It is a very damp heat and sometimes most oppressive, perhaps as trying to the Chinese as it is to foreigners, a fact which is mainly due to existing unchanging conditions. In poorer houses, the central hall is usually the general sitting-room for members of two or three families, as well as the playground of their cocks and hens, their "good-to-love" pigs and scavenger dogs. The tiles of the floor are swept from time to time, but never, never washed. This is true also of the cleaner guest halls in large and rich houses, where neither feathered nor four-footed friends are often denied admittance. Fortunately, the handsome and well carved furniture, severely arranged in uniform style, tends to an orderly keeping; four chairs and two small tables are placed in straight lines down the sides, each squarely facing the other, the space between them leading to a screen at the head of the hall, in front of which is the special table—a high ornamental stand for idols, tablets and incense—from beneath which a larger table projects, generally with seats of honour at each end. But bedrooms in houses of rich and poor are dusty, airless and dark, superstition demanding exclusion of light.

THE STREET WELL.

THE DRILL HALL.

Each contains a great cavernous bed, with inside fittings for wardrobe use, and the rest of the room is heavily furnished. On hot summer nights the owners, unable to face the oppressive heat, often sit at the open house door playing with fans until the first cock-crowing. While seasons change, food knows little of adaptation; hot rice is always the staple, day in and day out, throughout the year, eaten with vegetable, pickled and fresh—the one word "vegetable" covering the many small dainties, of fish, flesh and fowl, which are partaken of as condiment; tea, hot and cold, and "stretched" to a watery limit, is the beverage of old and young.

During the summer months, flies take immediate possession of all uncovered victuals, but the Chinese are seldom fastidious, and eat unconcernedly the things upon which swarms have fed.

With so little of hot weather preparation, no wonder that people say wearily, "The summer is hard to pass, and the heat to be greatly feared." Children suffer most of all, and indeed it is saddening to walk through the streets, when the summer is at its height, and see the hundreds of little ones pining, listless and sick, and generally covered with prickly heat in all degrees of severity, bespeaking a feverish fretfulness, most trying to child and parent.

There are certain home luxuries we much miss, and amongst them cold drinking water which has not been previously boiled. There are no taps to draw from, so every drop that is used comes laboriously from a well, with bucket and rope. But there are few untoward conditions which cannot be modified. When this Compound was being rebuilt, it was found possible to sink our own well. This brought not only a saving

of labour, but also much increase of summer comforts. Now, bottles of water, coffee and tea, with cords tied round their necks, live fifty feet down in cool depths, ready to come up at a moment's notice and which are easily filled with luke-warm supplies and lowered again to get cold.

A summer spent in this house gives ample opportunity for learning wisdom from the ways of a "little people," who may not be "strong," but yet are "exceeding wise." The ants do indeed, as King Solomon said, "provide their meat in the summer." They do it with all their might, and with the utmost urgency, assembling by instinct where there is food, shamelessly thieving, openly trespassing, intruding behind closed lids, into jars that are tightly stoppered, and other impossible places. They prefer sugar, powders and grains, biscuits and cakes. Nothing and no place is safe from their raiding. What do they not take as "meat"?

They hide in our sponges, run through our garments, and play on our beds, and (little brown villains!) they can nip with a sting, which really adds insult to injury. Over the table they run in their hundreds, hurrying in every direction; a merciless slaying and ruthless sweeping clears them for a while, but, undaunted in spirit, they wait to return in full force. They hold the house in possession for as long as the heat remains, then take their departure, no one knows whither.

There is always apprehension in a long spell of rainless heat as to the result it may have upon the small rice harvest, which comes in early September, weeks before the "great reaping." The people make no objection when officially ordered, on these occasions, to maintain, for so many days, a strict vegetarian diet. May it not count in the spirit-world as a definite

act of merit, and win for the country's need, spirit attention and favour!

METEOROLOGICAL NOTES, KIEN-NING CITY, 1916.

Months.	Temperature F.° in the shade.				Rainfall.	
	Maximum. Day.		Minimum Night.		No. of Inches.	No. of Rainy Days.
	Actual.	Mean.	Actual.	Mean.		
January	88°	67½°	26°	49½°	—	—
February	76°	59°	33°	47°	—	—
March	72°	60°	35°	48°	9·33	18
April	91°	79°	42°	63½°	6·66	9
May	94°	85°	60°	69°	15·30	13
June	98°	90°	67°	73°	6·39	7
July	103°	96°	76°	78°	9·39	7
August	100°	96°	72°	78°	2·76	8
September	101°	92½°	68°	75½°	1·84	5
October	92°	80½°	56°	63½°	·45	3
November	88°	74°	33°	50°	·06	1
December	79°	67°	33°	40½°	1·50	2

FOREIGN WORKERS IN KIEN-NING CITY AND DISTRICT.

Archdeacon Phillips, Mrs. Phillips,
The Vicarage.

H. R. Pakenham, M.B., Mrs. Pakenham,
H. D. Matthews, M.B., Mrs. Matthews,
Miss Bolton,
Men's Hospital, Women's Hospital.

Rev. A. Sills, Mrs. Sills,
The Boys' Boarding School.

Miss Lane,
The Girls' Boarding School.

Miss Darley, Miss Gaussen,
The Blind and Crippled Girls' School
and
General Women's work.

Miss Johnson, Miss Weekes,
City and District work.

CHAPTER II.

OUR HOUSE FRIENDS.

"Let no sickness or cross accident, no employment or weariness, make me angry or ungentle and discontented, or unthankful or uneasy to them that minister to me." Amen.

—*Jeremy Taylor.*

BEFORE introducing any one else, Cheng-Mi and Hiong-Seng must first come with their greeting of "Peace." Cheng-Mi is our cook and more. Hiong-Seng is maid of the house in all its departments. They and a garden messenger boy comprise the establishment.

It is most unusual to see a woman as cook in a Fukien Mission house; but here the unusual makes for comfort and fittingness. The plan was first tried, as an experiment, in the days when we lived at "Seven Stars Bridge," and it needed both courage and perseverance to carry it out. But, in due time, good results justified the venture, both in household arrangements and, as a unique opportunity, for helping women forward in the Christian life. Two of our faithful Bible-women, Cie-Aing and Hu-Eng, both now at rest, received, in this capacity, their first training from Miss Gardner. They were followed by O-Niong, who came to us as a refugee widow, fleeing from a wicked brother-in-law's attempted sale of her person, and only left us, twelve years later, when she wished to settle with her sons, in comfortable independence. Then Cheng-Mi arrived, bringing chaos to the kitchen, which,

1. CHENG-O. 2. HIONG-SENG. 3. CHENG-MI.
4. UONG-AING. 5. FOUR YEARS OLD.

initiation to the mysteries of foreign cooking gradually reduced to order. The process, worked by demonstration, caused no little diversion, for Cheng-Mi's dialect was at that time even more peculiar to herself than it is at present.

She came here in her first turning towards the Light, and in coming took her final departure from all idolatry. Then, for a time, cooking undoubtedly became her religion; her whole mind centred upon it, and mistakes came from very zeal. Bread, if under-baked this time, was over-baked the next; in either case the oven and charcoal were wrathfully blamed, until by degrees they and she met in agreement to produce the required thing. Working on the principle that some being good, more would be better, and objecting to a given recipe, we were for a long while thoroughly over-sweetened, salted and flavoured; but, all the time she was doing her very best, trying and trying again, until failure changed to partial success Now, she goes as far in proficiency as the needs of simple housekeeping require.

Loud of voice and rough in manner, but withal so kindly in heart that she has won the entire confidence of every woman and child in the place, she listens to their joys and sorrows, and helps them one and all.

It was some time before we could recommend her for Baptism, as at first her mind was too occupied with other things to take in the simple teaching; but later when, with mighty effort, she learned to repeat in her own quaint dialect the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments, could tell of her Saviour's love, and constantly pray for enabling strength, we gladly ceased from further objection.

Her heathen name with slight alteration would have become a particularly good Christian one, but

that did not please her at all, and the choosing of an "entering the Church" name was no light matter. She weighed and rejected one after another, and only decided upon her own Cheng-Mi (Deep Praise) on the morning of her wonderful Sunday. There are still occasions when the work of her hands is more important than the edifying of her mind, and one of these is in Church at the Morning Service, when she considers the sermon unduly long and has no pleasant glances for the preacher. Cheng-Mi works and walks very much more quickly than the average Chinese woman, while her trot up and down stairs is so characteristic, that it must be mentioned in an account of her. Once she dropped a tea-pot at the head of the staircase; handleless and spoutless, it rolled down, down, in an even succession of bumps to the bottom of the resounding wooden steps; and ever since, as she stumps down these stairs on the heels of her unbound feet, we are reminded of the thumping bump of that rolling tea pot. In anxious punctuality she and the clock are often at variance. The round hours may demand a striking regard for themselves, but to the intervening minutes but little attention is paid. One day, an early start had to be made from this house, for which we were to be called at 5.30 o'clock. Unwelcomed, she appeared an hour too soon, merely remarking in her own energetic way, "Better get up, for once that clock strikes four, it quickly, quickly comes to five."

We did not at once understand her reasoning in the matter of breakages. She has often appeared with a broken vessel in her hand, saying, "Very much not do, see," angrily holding the offending pieces out at arm's length. "All these bits, how can they be mended—Ee-tsigh!" This last as an expletive. only say-

ing "truly," but expressing so very much more.

"How did you break it?"

"I break? I? Not I! It collided with another vessel, that was the way of it!" No, Cheng-Mi only breaks an article when it actually falls from her hands to the floor. Then indeed she has broken it; and in abject contrition, severely blames so "no-use a person." At last, owing to an unusual number of breakages, it was suggested that if many more occurred, the mending might have to be at the breaker's expense. Soon afterwards a newly riveted dish was proudly presented for inspection, with the remark, in a tone amusingly expectant of approval, "See, Diau Sister, Hiong-Seng has had all these rivets put in for you."

Cheng-Mi is a widow, with four sons, two of whom are apprenticed to a trade in this city, and two live with their uncles elsewhere. The eldest and youngest are respectively named Bones and Box. A time may come when either Bones or Box will need their mother to live with them; but no one else, and nothing else, could win her from a home in which she makes a kind of indispensable centre.

In missionary work it is wonderfully interesting to be able to trace some of the ways in which the Holy Spirit works to win a soul for the Lord Jesus; bringing influences to bear upon it, with long patience waiting for it. Not often is the salvation, as proclaimed by human lips, straightway accepted; but from then the lost soul knows how it may be found.

Twenty-five years ago Hiong-Seng was born in Diang-Dong, a mountain village twenty miles from here, and that very year three foreigners, Miss Johnson and the Misses Newcombe, arrived, to spend the hottest summer months in an inn beside her home.

The villagers were too superstitiously frightened to be receptive, and Hiong-Seng remembers hearing, as a small child, of a landslip which occurred upon just that part of the mountain where the foreigners went for their evening walks. Naturally the catastrophe was ascribed to their wonder-working powers, and seven years later when Miss Johnson and Cie-Aing went there again, the people had such a superstitious fear of them that they found no one willing to receive them at all. Hiong-Seng was about ten years old when, for the third time, the undaunted strangers arrived at the inn beside her house, and stayed in it for fourteen days, preaching from morn till eve.

Miss Gardner and Cie-Aing may not have noticed the shy child slipping in to see and hear, trying to understand the "good, true words," for outwardly there was nothing to show that over the darkness of her little heart, there was the brooding of the Holy Spirit. But fear again prevailed, and when the foreigners had to leave, Hiong-Seng's father was the only man in the whole place brave enough to carry their load-baskets to her next destination. Hiong-Seng was engaged when nine years old to a boy older than herself, living in the same village. Three years later, during a severe attack of malaria, she was carried to her new home, for her mother-in-law was fearful of losing the daughter-in-law she had paid for, and distrusted all nursing but her own. Immediately upon recovery the ill-favoured and delicate boy-husband took a most unreasonable dislike to his little wife, ill-treating and beating her, threatening to kill her and frightening her by expressions of hatred. The poor child was so utterly miserable that her own parents insisted upon her returning to them, and from that time, although the engagement was not broken

off, yet she never went back to live in her husband's house. A horrible fear now took possession of the girl's heart and troubled it for many a year. She belonged to this boy; he might sell her to some one else, and who could save her from him? When the whole family moved from their village home to live in this city, they settled down not far from the Blind Village, where Hiong-Seng's blind Aunt Su-Gi was just then turning towards the Light. Su-Gi soon brought her fourteen-year-old village niece to "see worship" at the Sunday services. Seeing was interesting, but the hearing of one sentence in particular brought wonderful cheer—"The Lord Jesus will save." Not from the consequences of sin; that truth came later; but from the tyranny of her boy husband. Indeed she would become the worshipper of so great a Saviour. And yet—now, to her wondering regret—she let six whole years pass by without once coming to Church again, simply because unwilling to meet the opposition and ridicule which, as a worshipper, she would have to endure. But that sentence lived in her heart, and gradually she found herself longing with great longing to know the Lord Jesus.

One day, when Hiong-Seng was sorting tea in a crowded hall, Mrs. Pakenham and a Bible-woman came in to preach. "Invite her over here; let me invite her to preach over here," the girl exclaimed excitedly. "Do not, do not," her companions urged. "How could we work and listen?" Hiong-Seng accepted the decision, but resolved in her mind that if "Ba Su-mu" ever returned she would "run to her side and earnestly listen."

Only a few days later, Liong-Aing, then taking the Bible-woman's training, appeared in that same hall,

with a message to give to all who would care to hear it. Hiong-Seng immediately preparing a seat, called her to " Sit and preach." She responded to every word, and when invited to attend a " Great Worship " upon the following Sunday, she decided then and there to become a Christian.

Early on Sunday morning she got up, after an almost sleepless night, but excitement changed to disappointment with the breaking of a hopelessly wet day. However, on the following and three successive Sundays, nothing hindering, she attended the services in quiet wondering happiness. Then a time of testing came to her. " I command you to leave off this worship," ordered her father. " You are getting me laughed at and spoken about."

" I cannot leave off, for I must worship," the girl retorted with determination.

" You, a daughter, to answer like that. Truly daring ! Beaten, you shall be beaten," exclaimed her mother, and forthwith found a heavy bamboo rod, with which she struck her many times.

Hiong-Seng said nothing, but set herself to sulk and starve, in true Chinese fashion, a method which often causes the offended and the offender to change places.

Still fasting on the second day, she overheard her father say, " I do not want her to be sad to sickness, but never again must she go to worship," and her mother answered, " If we hinder her she may want to go the more ; let her be, and perhaps her mind will change." Comforted by this last remark, she quietly appeared at the next meal, but on the following Saturday morning she again remained in bed and wanted no food. " No, not ill," but intending to stay where she was, until they gave her permission to go to

Church. By Sunday morning, both parents had attained to a peaceful, if weak, no-help-for-it attitude, and her father went off to his work, leaving her mother to meet the surrender. This came at midday, with the order to " Get up and go." Years afterwards, while relating the above incidents, she continued with fervour, " Oh, what taste that service had to me! I was taught St. Matthew ii. 28. The words entered into me : they made me exceeding glad. All the way home I said them aloud. I ran to my mother, told her of the cheer in my heart, and repeated the verse ; but her head was bent down and she answered me nothing. From that day I determined to worship with strength. My body safe, my soul saved, no more fear, the Saviour's grace towards me greater than words can tell."

At this period she was earning for herself by helping in heathen homes, and when she was offered work of a similar kind in our Women's Hospital, accepted it without hesitation, for, " Had Song Sister [1] said nothing of money at all, I would still most gladly have gone to her, for the sake of learning the Bible and of being with Christians." The carrying out of this plan gave her a helpful and happy time, though not without cost to the employment, in which she was not at her best. After a while it was decided to give her a regular course of study in the Women's School. How gladly she came, and how hardly she learned ; not lacking in will, but in ability to think and remember. For nearly two years both teacher and taught strove in the successful laying of a solid foundation, but the building thereon was laboured and slow. Then, in an hour of household need, she besought a release from book learning and leave to serve us

[1] Miss Johnson.

instead; and in the granting of this request there has been no cause for regret. She is learning her Bible all the time; helps in receiving heathen visitors, who usually come in companies unannounced, and she often visits in spare time those whom she is seeking to win for the Lord. What gladness she knew in the past two years when her parents became Christians, and how in the late sorrow of parting with them, one within a month of the other, it truly rejoiced her to think of them as together, "At Home" with their Lord. "When my two heathen grandmothers passed from this world, their faces were wet with tears. But when the Lord Jesus came for my mother, she went to Him smiling in gladness, while as for my father, he was in haste to set out." A beautiful "going in" was given to this dear old man. He suddenly became alert, then, as if answering a far-off call, repeatedly said in a strong, clear voice, "I am coming," "I am coming." Hiong-Seng cried out in fear, "My father, be still, be still," for it seemed as if some one must surely appear in the room. But he continued to answer gently, more gently, "Am coming," "Am coming," until, in a sighed-out "Coming," he ceased to breathe. Hiong-Seng has only one sister, and she now is near to the Kingdom of God. Not long ago, she said to Hiong-Seng, "Ever since our mother beat you, I have wanted to be a saved person; you did not know that the beating bamboo was hidden that day by me; now in my house, but secretly, for fear of my husband, I pray very often to God."

It is quite possible that Hiong-Seng may yet be enabled to become a Bible-woman, as her girlhood's so-called "husband" is dead; but at present her joy is in serving us here.

She is a round, short, soft little person; her move-

ments, in striking contrast to those of Cheng-Mi, are slow and gentle. She has a habit, peculiarly her own, of walking with the left hand hung droopingly in front of her. Her voice is strangely old, quavers at times, and is always monotonous. Fortunately it has hours and days of comparative silence, for when in use it is suggestive of water flowing, as from a tap, steadily on and on. When left to herself, the round of household duties is accomplished without variation from day to day; and although seldom initiating the slightest change, she is always pleased when called upon for extra work in time of pressure.

In most Chinese houses a daily dusting would be counted an unnecessary pastime; for dust is rarely disturbed until the twelfth month, when it is forcibly removed to give place to a new year's supply. Hiong-Seng's dusting may, in time, become an acquired accomplishment, but at present she does it caressingly. She carefully lifts an article and tenderly presses her duster against some part of it, and against the place where it stood; then, having gently replaced it, she passes, with a few light touches, to treat the next object in a similar way. A lack of reasoning power often makes her quaintly amusing, of which the following instances are an illustration. Scones, hot from the oven, served in a warmed and covered dish, had to play at keeping hot, in subsequent cold appearances, when she was careful to present them in the same protected way. One day she cleared out a room for an onslaught of masons; at the usual hour, on the following morning, she actually opened the curtainless windows, swept the bare floor, and was about to dust an emptied shelf, when someone reminded of a swift-coming havoc on walls and ceiling, a season of desolation, in which the poor room might be unable

to appreciate her care for its final well-being. "That is true," she remarked in gentle assent.

Hiong-Seng may be lacking in some power of reasoning and in initiative, but in her most willing service and utter trustworthiness she makes full amendment for any such little shortcomings.

We know that this time of mutual helpfulness has been given to us by the adorable Master, Whom together we serve in joy and high privilege.

CHAPTER III.

MI-SENG.

"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." —*Ruth* i. 16.

THE following story of one, who left us in June to enter the Heavenly Home, tells of another with whom we were brought into touch, after her heart had been "opened."

Nearly five years ago a gentle and sad-faced woman arrived with her little son, having come a four days' journey by boat and chair.

She announced herself very simply: "I have come to live with you, to learn the doctrine, to worship the one true God. I ask you to keep me: will help as I can, only teach me the Holy Book."

Her arrival was like a coming home, for she found her niche at once and fitted it perfectly. The blind children knew that a mother had come, and crept into a heart and arms all ready to give them a beautiful mothering. Mi-Seng sewing with the blind babes by her is a picture of those days, for somehow the family mending found its way to hands well skilled in needlework.

It was the Rev Li Da-Guang, a connection of her own, who first of all brought her to a knowledge of God: a fact which indebted her deeply to him. "He preached Jesus, the Saviour, and my heart in its sadness answered in full belief. From then I fully

determined to forsake all the no-use things of this world, and with my whole strength turn towards the Kingdom of God."

She was young when her husband and little boy died, within a few months of each other; and in China's strange sympathy for bereaved motherhood, they bought her the son of another, to take the place of her own. "But my heart was so full of sadness that nothing could comfort, and no one could help. The idols, my idols, had utterly failed me. In angry despair I broke and destroyed them all."

As a heathen, desiring to acquire merit, she refused to marry again, a decision which met with the disapproval of her relations-in-law, and the succeeding years of unyielding opposition to their will in this matter developed that quiet determination and strength of character which enabled her to act upon the Pastor's advice and come to this school. It was no light thing for a shy, retiring woman to leave her home for ever, but the strength of her incentive prevailed over each difficulty and conquered all fear of an unknown future. We soon delighted in her as one of God's best gifts—a friend to share in the responsibility of the work. Reserved in manner, she unconsciously won the respect of all, while her balanced mind, and heart at leisure, sent many to counsel with her when seeking for light and "right judgment." Yes, we looked for long service together, but—and is there not something of awe in the realization of a fulfilled plan?—within five years from her arrival (September, 1911, to June, 1916) Christ called her to Himself. She "Being sanctified (margin) in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for (her) soul pleased the Lord" (Wisdom iv. 13, 14).

By "bands of love" He drew her here in preparation for higher service. From Him, the "meek and

lowly in heart," she learned to suffer and be strong, and to become in patient gentleness an inspiration to us all. Mi-seng's baptism and confirmation were times of great blessing to her, and few have more deeply appreciated the benefits of the Holy Communion. Neither extremes of weather, nor physical unfitness, were allowed to prevent her from taking the twenty minutes' walk to A-sai-o Church for our monthly celebration. She was with us for some eighteen months, when we were visited with an epidemic of typhoid. With others, she went down to the Brink of the River and waited there. Some crossed it. She came back slowly and painfully through long weeks of great weakness and then a gradual regaining of strength ; but a distressing cough remained. Never complaining, she gladly resumed her former work, and soon accepted more responsibility as matron of the Blind School, for which no strength of body could have given her greater fitness, where with gentle ruling she enforced obedience without apparent effort.

But the cough grew more troublesome, and other symptoms of delicacy proclaimed the disease so prevalent and so feared by the Chinese that they whisper the dreaded name, and write its character in a descriptive combination—" Strength " under " Cover," " Fire-Fire " enclosed in " Sickness." Mi-seng pleaded again and again to be counted as " not ill," and allowed to work to the end. To please us she consented to periods of hospital treatment, but her heart was with the children, and her joy in returning to them touchingly intense. It was during her last time there, that once in all the time we knew her, she departed from a straight line of rectitude. " Three weeks without fever, and she might go home." The

decree was welcome indeed, but " Fire-Fire " returned each day, and the hope of home receded, until, in an over wrought state of mind, she cleverly practised a piece of deception, and thereby attained the desired end; yet, strangely enough, by a peculiar method of reasoning, she reconciled the act both then and later to her conscience.

One evening she was sorrowfully told that, for the sake of the children she loved, separation between them and her must be complete. There was silence, a struggle for composure, then the whispered resignation, " If this were not the very best, you would not require it; be comforted, God will help me." With the laying down of her work, she ceased her brave striving to be counted " not ill," and knew that the rest time had come. It marked her entrance into " The Valley of the Shadow of Death," and the road was wearily rough, physical distress being now greatly increased by the development of acute tubercular laryngitis. Once, when almost exhausted with pain and coughing, she looked up and said, " My throat like this is God's good plan for a quicker release."

She loved to speak of the heavenly Home, and in those talks we were close to the unseen things which are eternal. Of fear she had none. Death, the actual passing away, had, in anticipation, no terror for her; that counted for nothing in the glad looking past it to the glory beyond. In repose of mind, due to unquestioning reliance upon the merits of her Saviour's death, she was able to say in all sincerity, " I have not one thing to trouble me; my heart is perfectly peaceful."

During one of the last talks she was asked what she thought the first moments of seeing the Lord would

mean—an outpouring of rapturous adoring love? Or, might there be something of strangeness? Did we really know Him well enough here to be sure we should know Him then? Mi-seng turned towards the questioner with a smile that was absolutely illuminating and said, "With the Lord Jesus strange? How could I? No, oh no."

The end of the valley came into sight, after days, when weakness and pain seemed above measure. By day or by night an extremity of restlessness could only be soothed by a few words of whispered prayer, to which she would breathe an "Amen," and sometimes with her smile of peculiar sweetness give the gentle dismissal, "Now, comforted, go to rest; with me all is well."

Consumption.

All unknowingly, upon her wonderful day, it was arranged that she should receive the Holy Communion. In pleased preparation she asked to be dressed as for a Sunday service, and at the appointed time seven of those she loved best met to partake with her. We gently sang two verses of her favourite hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." The Rev. H. S. Phillips read chosen parts of the Visitation of the Sick

and the Holy Communion Services, and had just partaken himself when, as her eyes were closing, she was at once raised to receive the bread and wine, and laid gently down again ; a few long drawn breaths, and she had entered into her bliss of Rest. The golden gates opened, we watched her enter, and came away praising God for such a fittingly beautiful passing in to the Presence of One with Whom she could not feel " strange."

" Lord, till I meet Thee thus, life is delayed ;
I am not I until that morning breaks,
Not I until my consciousness eternal wakes."
George Macdonald.

When a gentle old man, one of Ciong-Bau's firs Christians, was dying in the spring, he asked his sons to send for Miss Weekes the moment he passed away, as he wished her to hold a little " prayer-service " with those who were left behind. Perhaps he meant it as praise for entrance into his Father's Home.

Unconscious the day before, through the night he had his vision ; and as his last great hour drew nigh he said in simple assurance, " The angels have come for me now, but I am waiting for the Lord Jesus."

* * * * *

The Chinese are quaintly amusing in the casual way they speak of and plan for their own funeral arrangements, while the possession of a coffin-in-waiting is very correct and greatly to be desired. Lately, a man, who is well known as " Sawn-off-leg Church uncle," was met in the city gateway, which leads to his home in the Leper Village, where, like many another non-leper, he lives and earns for himself. The tap tap of the wooden leg was so brisk and determined, and the man's whole bearing so vigorous, that a remark was naturally added to the usual

平安

Peace

壽

Long life

1. UONG-HU. 2. A STREET. 3. MI-NGI AND HER LITTLE SON.

greeting of "Peace," "Nong-cie, you truly are well just now." In answer, he proudly waved his hand to load-bearers who followed carrying a brand-new coffin, while an acquaintance explained in brief terms, "His own ; wife has one too ; both to be painted ; then perfectly ready." The occasion demanded congratulatory wishes for long life, in which to enjoy his possession. Guang-Seng commands that her funeral must be such as will attract notice and cause the heathen to say, "See how the Christians honour their dead!" She wishes a feast of many tables, and a large escort of friends to follow a "good-looking" coffin, borne by its sixteen men, out to the "Happy Garden." And now she requests that a large piece of ground may be set apart there for her grave. "All my life I have lived in poor dwellings ; in death, my body must comfortably sit and very securely dwell."

Cheng-Ling, a fine old lady, now in her eighty-fifth year, was delightfully cheered when promised a red-painted coffin with the "Long life" (see illustration) character, written in gold at its end, which the "sisters" themselves would follow. "That honour for me!" she exclaimed. "Then may God keep you here until I set out."

One of our earliest Christians, a very saintly old man, asked that, as "more convenient" and a saving of later trouble, he might spend his last hours in the uncovered coffin, ready to go to sleep. Only last week, in quaint combination, a funeral and birthday feast were celebrated in one, for, had the man lived but a few months longer, he would have completed his seventieth year, and then been duly honoured. One wonders if the guests could equally combine their mourning and rejoicing in regulated style. And yet these people, except in the common "Worried to

death," "Sad to death" expressions, do not care to say the word death, nor to speak of dying as dying, but mention the fact in descriptive ways, like "Pass from the body," "Pass from the world," "Gone," "Started," "Not present," and the saddest of all, in connection with children, "No use," and "Wasted." Our Christians need only discard the last two, and often add on to the others, "To receive happiness," "By the Lord Jesus, received away."

The heathen bury their dead all over the lower mountains; for choice, in places where the view is open and magnificent, giving the spirits of wind and water free access to come and go. They excavate the graves in cave-like fashion and push the coffin in lengthwise, the broad part farthest in; then for the bricked-in opening, the gravestone forms a door, and an elaborate facing and frontage is built in a horseshoe shape. If two coffins are in one grave they are those of husband and wife—his to the left, in place of honour, hers to the right; and each must have a head-stone. £15 will buy the best coffin which Kien-Ning can produce, and £1 to within £3 the usual cheaper kinds. The size increases with the price and is always described in spans, from one and a half to four as the width of the narrow end. When an honoured, rich man dies, his family like him to enter the mysterious other world right regally apparelled, and so he is dressed in some nine suits of clothes and as many again are packed with him; on his feet he wears high black velvet boots with very white soles, and on his head the cap of a high official. His head rests on a pillow filled with three to four hundred silvered paper, sham dollars [1]; and he wears a bracelet

[1] One hundred paper dollars cost four real dollars.

and thumb-ring of jade, mounted in gold and pearls. Then on the funeral day, twenty-four, thirty-two, or thirty-six men, known as "Yellow clay feet," carry the coffin away. Men relatives, clothed in loose, sackcloth garments, lead the way, holding a rope of white cloth; men friends walk behind, followed by many chairs, in each of which a woman relative wails all the time. With banners and music, they "Do dragon" through street after street, until at the city gates the procession is at an end. There, mourners discard their sackcloth, wailings suddenly cease, and all disperse, except the few who take the dismantled coffin on to the mountain grave.

Immediately after, there are death ceremonies to be performed, called "Doing lights and sevens," for which the services of Buddhist or Tâoist priests are required—the former in order to cleanse the house from the defilement of death influence, the latter for exorcism when death has come by violence or in any unnatural way. Monotonous incantations, presentation of food offerings, with hours of women's wailing, a wailing of expiation for the sins of the departed, comprise the ceremonial. The poor need only enact this once, but those with better means repeat it on each seventh day until the forty-ninth; again on the sixty-second and the one hundred and twentieth days. That on the sixty-second day is one of special importance; it includes the escorting of a large paper boat, filled with things for luxurious living, even with paper-made cooks and slaves, through the streets of the city out to the river-side, by a great following of priests and relatives, of ancestral tablet and banner-bearers, and with the blowing of horns and other weird sounds and clouds of burning incense. There, by conflagration, the boat and contents are sent to the soul

in Hades. The last "Doing of lights and sevens," on the one hundred and twentieth day, ends in a "Thanking mourning" feast, at which cakes of a special kind must always be provided. Now, the principal mourners may once more shave and pass from deep to slighter mourning for a period of three years, during which time the sons may not marry and the house should be hung with blue and white scrolls instead of the usual red ones. At the conclusion of three years the family may decide upon reopening the grave for the purpose of cremation, known as "Collecting gold." They put the ashes in an earthenware jar, and call it

Garden. Happy. Extremely.

the "Golden crock," when it usually takes the place of the coffin in the grave. The bracelet and ring when recovered are family possessions of considerable value.

The Christian cemetery here is now at "Seven Stars Bridge," on the site of our last halting-place, before an entrance was obtained within the city gates. It is a beautiful waiting-place, on the steep and terraced hillside, overlooking a well-loved river and mountain view, with the city in the distance. The three large Chinese characters over the entrance door mean, "Extremely Happy Garden," a name our workers chose when the "garden" was set apart. The funerals held there from time to time can be very solemn and restful, especially on summer evenings, towards

the setting of the sun, when nature around is instinct with fullness of life and beauty, and everything breathes of hope, most "Sure and certain," for yet another "With Christ," Whose very near coming will give us those "Raptured greetings." And one's heart is so filled with joy in anticipation that it thinks much less of the laying to sleep than of the wondrous waking, less of the sorrow of parting and more of reunion bliss.

CHAPTER IV.

THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN HEATHEN CHINA.

"There is no . . . mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."—*Hos.* iv. 1.

"They plead not the cause of the fatherless, and the right of the needy do they not judge."—*Jer.* v. 25.

"In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy."—*Hos.* xiv. 3.

THERE are seasons when one lives quietly on in a heathen land not actively conscious of heathen "frightfulness," and there are also seasons when, by force of circumstances, one has to know it is going on all the time, whether we meet it or not. Twice in one week we dealt with it at close quarters, and the conviction is borne in upon us that similar and worse things happen daily all over this great dark land.

Four days ago a very excited "Church Uncle" came in to "speak words of importance," just at a moment when I imagined there was no time to hear them. But he, knowing better, declared, in a voice of command, "Diau Sister, for my news you have time. I request you to sit down and listen." Having accepted his statement, he also sat down, and spoke his words of importance in eloquent earnestness, straight from a heart moved with pity. "To-day, in West Street, a friend met me and said, 'You worshipping God-man! your heart is good, come; do a meritorious deed.' As he led me along, I heard people say, 'See,

the worshipping God-man will do good and save life.' . . . On the ground at my feet, in sickness and blindness, a boy about six years of age, thrown there to die, knelt where he was and held his arms out to me. . . . Could I withstand him ? In a voice loud and clear, I proclaimed to all within hearing, ' The God Whom I worship has taught me to love and to pity ; the devil you serve makes you hard-hearted and cruel.' Three days that child has been calling for help, which only a Christian will give. . . . Diau Sister, my duty lies in telling you of his pitiful misery ; your duty lies in receiving him here."

" True, Church Uncle. Now neither you nor I can dare ' to pass by on the other side,' but does your duty end as informant ? The child is a boy ; this Home is for girls. If we take him in now and nurse him to health, will you undertake for his future well-being ? "

" Speak no more words, Diau Sister, speak no more words ; according as God commands me I will do in this matter. Without further delay I go for the boy."

But, lo and behold ! the child he brought in was a girl, not a boy ; and the face of Chuoi, Church Uncle, beamed in pleased satisfaction as he gladly announced, " Thank God, thank God ; she is a girl, my part in the affair is now finished." Whereupon he promptly departed, declining repayment of the coins he had given in getting her carried to us. From a safe distance, a few of our women looked at the blind waif as she lay in extremity, panting for breath, burning with fever, horribly dirty, and denounced in unmeasured terms the hard-hearted people, who, seeing her sick unto death, in direful need of attention, had deliberately thrown her out on the street to die, to be buried they cared not by whom. They denounced all who had seen the outcast and left her alone for three days

and three nights, scorched by the sun, and chilled in the darkness; forgetting that, before they themselves loved the God Who is love, they would no doubt have been equally callous.

Uong-Hu, who followed Mi-Seng in a mother-like care for the children, was moistening the poor parched lips, and gravely preparing to do much more, when, her face all glowing in love-light, she feelingly said, "See! her arms are stretching out towards us; God help us to save this life." For over four days she fought with death, making herself ill in the struggle. Terribly restless, the fevered child could not for one moment be quiet, nor know she was now in a home where there was nothing whatever to fear. In tones high and low, as her strength waxed and waned, she varied her cries for "Tea, give me tea," with the sad, wailing relic of past wicked treatment, "Why, why destroy me! Oh, do not destroy me. You must, you must not destroy me." She suddenly stilled. Was it for life? Yes, endless, beautiful life. While watching her sleeping, somebody whispered, "Perhaps, all the Lord Jesus asks us to do is to escort her peacefully into His Presence." And when early on Sunday morning His behest was fulfilled, Uong-Hu said through her tears, "For her, truly most good, but I greatly longed to keep her."

Her own people had had less than no love to give her; there was no crying when they cast her out; but the last five days of her six years on earth were blessed with love and tears of regret, and a smile of content was left on the worn little face after her spirit had fled. Nameless she came to us, but "Loved" she went from us, for Sui-Aing wrote it on the board for her grave, adding below, "Little sister, aged six. Beloved of God."

By strange coincidence a wee cripple girl was brought here the same day and hour as " Loved " ; and again it had needed a Christian to recognize cruelty and seek to deliver the victim.

Away in a village home a sweet-tempered, fat baby girl was beginning to talk, and had learned to walk, well cared for by her parents. It was then that plague came stalking from place to place, leaving death and sorrow in his train. He came to the fat baby's village and smote her first of all ; next, her mother, father, grandparents, and then passed on to others ; but only a sickly baby lived in the house into which he first entered, and she the least wanted of any. She now belonged to her uncle, who was ready to give her a home, but his wife had neither time nor heart for any but her own. The poor little child in her weakness was not able to bear the unkind neglect, and soon became utterly helpless. Then, by day and by night, she just lay on the ground, eating such scraps as were thrown her. But the Father, Who knows of the fall of each sparrow, sent Liong-Aing to that very village and home, and she, in compassionate pity, at once wrote to ask if we could take the babe in here.

After eight days with us, she gave her first cry. Think of a three-year-old cripple, so accustomed to lack of attention, to do without mothering, so accustomed to sickness and pain that she seemed to expect nothing else ! Patient, too patient, and strangely resigned, taking just what she was given, the sweet and the bitter, without a smile, or a cry, never asking for more or less. Twice we thought she was following " Loved," but now we think we may keep her, and perhaps she need not always be crippled, in either mind or body. Like a net-entangled bird she lies quiet and spent in her

deliverer's hand, too bruised for further struggling; then strength returns, with a happy sense of freedom, and the wings not really broken bear her up once more in flight.

In the early part of the summer we homed a blind baby girl who could share with advantage the patience which the crippled child has to spare She is two years old, but looks much less, can neither stand nor say one word, and is seldom at peace with her world. "She won't let us touch her," the children said. "She is not good for play; she only knows how to cry." Oh, it *is* hard to win a blind baby, who has never been kindly treated. Always in darkness, always dependent, not knowing what any one comes to do, until she is suddenly handled. Never a look at a pretty thing—that has no meaning for her; but she likes to be carried, to feel strong arms around her, and press a small fretted face against the one who holds her. She was sitting in her high chair one day, and three little children sat beside her, doubling themselves up with merriest laughter. "We are teaching 'Cry-Cry' to laugh," they said, "and we think she is going to do it." A little child's "eating of sorrow" can cause either rebellion or a crushing of spirit, according to natural temperament, and this must be considered, as character traits develop, which may need special dealing.

Will the reading of these stories cause any one to ask if Chinese Christians are always kind, and if they are all so completely changed that none of them can act cruelly? An answer may be given in another simple question, "How could a Christian of any nation, who is truly born again, be consciously cruel to a fellow creature?" For "In this the children of God are manifest, whosoever . . . is not of God, . . . loveth

not his brother." Praise for the many Chinese Christians who, in lives of consistent loving, prove they are born anew, the men and women who could not, unnecessarily, add an iota to the suffering around. But, when some heathenish act is committed by a Christian, one longs that swift repentance may show it came from yielding in an unguarded moment to sudden, sore temptation; for if there is no remorse, repence or contrition, one has to know that the "stony heart" is not yet changed to the "heart of flesh." There are certain horrible doings which any one named a Christian would have nothing to do with at all; for instance, the burying of lepers and other outcasts while they still live, for fear of infection, in the actual hour of natural dying, and the appalling traffic in children for unnameable depths of evil. But, alas! it is not a very unusual thing for Christians to give away their baby girls—as a rule to Christians—so completely that no later connection whatever exists between parent and child; even Christian mothers have been known to send to the foundling home their hour-old infants, never expecting to see them again. Last year, in our City Church, at a Sunday morning service, an elderly village Christian stood up to acknowledge his sorrow for a deliberate act of cruelty, which had justly brought him under Church discipline. His grown up, half-witted son, addicted to kleptomania and the playing of foolish pranks, was a constant source of annoyance and cause of shame to his people, who did not know how to restrain him. One day their anger was roused by a bigger theft than usual, when, with the help of others, the father bound his son and darkened his eyes for ever. Months later we met him in the Blind Village, feeling his way about, his face more vacant than before, a wreck of his

former self, making one long to pierce through the darkness of heart and mind with a ray of saving light; but here one touches mystery which a God of Love will solve.

CHAPTER V.

UNLOVED AND NOT WANTED.

"Like as a father pitieth his children."—*Ps.* ciii. 13.
"As one whom his mother comforteth."—*Isa.* lxvi. 13.

THERE is not a child in this school who, from her own experience, could understand the gracious comparison by which the Father's pitying compassion for His frail children is brought within reach of our comprehension.

The following extracts from essays, lately written by the elder blind girls in Braille type, under a heading of "*My very Saddest Days*," both prove this assertion, and also explain the need of a Home for the blind and the maimed.

Was it well that these children should refresh their memories of a hateful past? Perhaps it is sometimes good that we should "Look unto . . . the hole of the pit whence (we) were digged" (Isa. li. 1), and from personal experience sing with David, "He brought *me* up also out of an horrible pit . . . He hath put a new song in my mouth" (Ps. xl. 2).

Uong-Aing, now the cheeriest of people, writes that her sorrows began in her fifth year, for then "My mother died and my father sold me away to become a daughter-in-law. My mother-in-law saw me as little and useless, her heart was not towards me, and when I was sick she wished me to die. For four years she hated me, and then I went blind. She was angered to death; I had wasted her money; she had fed me

for nothing. I cried for the light gone from my eyes, and feared with great fear when she threatened to carry me in my sleep to the mountain behind the house and leave me there for tigers to eat."

Poor little girl! this last statement explained her dread of being left alone and nightly terror of tigers in her early days here. Now she knows that sunshine came to her life through the darkening of her eyes, but this belongs to a later story (page 88).

Sing-Aing's worst sufferings were the result of her own mother's cruelty. She was already blind when her father died, and after his death "My mother had no thought of keeping me with her, and when a blind beggar man came to our house she gave me to him and forced me to follow him. I cried with loud crying, and would not move, until he went away without me. My mother was then to be feared. She threatened to have me buried alive. The sadness of those days is not to be told."

Cu-Aing's mother not only threatened, but was actually at the river-side, going to drown her, when the intervention of a relative prevented the horrible deed from taking place. "Evil spirits had sent my blindness, the luck of the house was gone, my death might cause their anger to cease; for this reason my mother tried to bury me alive, but again was hindered by some one. I was ten years old when my father brought me to the Blind Village."

Uing-Hu's story begins with a sadly usual happening. "Because I was born a girl, my mother ordered my drowning, but a woman relative forced her to keep me. Five years later, when I went blind, she determined I should not live and made my father carry me to the river to drown me. He was stopped on the road by people, who persuaded him to bring me home again."

Here, a happy change breaks on the heathen piteousness of this account. "The Jesus Doctrine was preached in our village. My mother became a Christian. From that time, until she sent me here, she spoke no more of not wanting to keep me."

Lo-Duoi, a child daughter-in-law in a wretchedly poor family, suffered much hardship. "I remember being often hungry and I seldom had enough to eat. At night, I slept on the floor with little to cover me. My eyes growing darker and darker, it was arranged to give me away." An arrangement which happily brought her here, after a wheelbarrow journey of many days, from the Province of Kiang-si.

Further extracts are unnecessary; these few will suffice to show that the fact of a child's affliction, in a heathen home, instead of arousing compassionate love, causes a hardening of heart and treatment so cruel that the actual affliction is less than the subsequent suffering. Cu-Aing, in attributing her blindness to the malevolent working of evil spirits, went to the source of this suffering. The heathen mind is tormented by a conviction that spirits and devils are always in waiting to harm and oppress human beings. It therefore behoves human beings to act unremittingly on the defensive, by offering food, burning incense and other observances. But no amount of vigilance safeguards against adversity, sickness and death. These call for appeasement and exorcism in feasts, idol temple theatricals, paid incantations and processions. To-day, in this city, owing to an increase of plague, the words "Expel devils" have been on the lips of thousands; for a great expel-devil procession has threaded its streets; rulers, jailers and underlings of hell were represented by frame-work figures of enormous height, by hideous

dwarfs in monster head-masks, and by men dressed in old-time costumes. These walked in order, heralded by the beating of drums and clashing of instruments. When, in spite of all ordinary precautions, a child is singled out by the spirits for misfortune, is it surprising that she should be subjected to all manner of ill-treatment, as the transmitter of ill-luck to her family? Seen from the standpoint of heathen fearfulness, her presence is a menace to the safety of others, and, in a natural line of reasoning, leads to the "Not keeping," "Not wanting," "Giving away," "Poisoning," "Drowning" and "Burying." How hopelessly sad for the child when the love she should have is ruled out by fear.

In happy contrast it is pleasant to recall a little incident which occurred in connection with the essay writing. One evening, Cheng-O said in questioning perplexity, "I began to write of my saddest day, but it was not really sad. In all my life I remember no sad, sad day, not one" This happy child was a Ku-tien "Bird's Nest" blind foundling, and her blessedly true confession bears beautiful testimony to a Christian upbringing.

Parent love undoubtedly exists in China, but it is not the parent love of a Christian country, and its essential difference lies in the fact that the love of Chinese parents is given to their children in expectation of return benefit. "I have nothing more to expect from him; in vain I brought him into the world, in vain I brought him up," came over and over again in the wailing cry of a Christian mother, when mourning the death of her eldest son. And a heathen woman's most bitter lament is, "Why, why was my son taken first? Who now will attend to my body and soul, here and hereafter?" Utterances such as these are of

1. SEWING, KNITTING AND EATING SUGAR CANE.
2. MI-HU PLAYS, WHILE CHENG-O SINGS.
3. SUGAR CANE BABIES.
4. " WE HAVE TO KNIT."

commonest hearing, and the truth they express can close the heart of a parent to a stricken child, who, by a misfortune, has frustrated the hopes centred upon her. It may also account for the prevalence of infanticide. No more than the exact number of daughters, from whom a sufficient return may be expected, to make the trouble and expense of upbringing worth while, will be acceptable; one more, and, without remorse or regret, "The child is not." "For," as a Chinese gentleman lately remarked, "who but a rich man could afford to keep more than three or four daughters, and even a rich man, would he want to see girls in the four corners of his house?"

About fifty years ago, in order to prevent undue "Child waste," a Foundling Home was opened in this city. It is financed by the Prefect and supervised by the gentry, and while it evinces a deplorable lack of true mother-love, it undoubtedly is a philanthropic institution. The annual average expenditure is $2,000 (£200), and the annual average of foundlings received is 300. Its principal function comes under the three following headings:—

To provide accommodation for the unwanted infants of the rich and the poor.

To supply without expense daughters and daughters-in-law to all who apply for them.

To establish a system of poor relief.

The aims are fulfilled at the cost of great abuse. The place is not a home in any true sense of the word; it is a baby emporium. The authorities do not keep more than eight infants at most within its walls, for there are numbers of poor women, glad to become foster-mothers for the sake of a regular monthly allowance. Numbers purposely dispose of their own newly-born babes, in order to secure one with money;

and a few from sheer stress of poverty slip a loved child into the receiver, through an ever open small door, beside the great entrance (always a night-time act), and afterwards, by skilful manœuvring, recover their own again, with wages for minding it. These wages gradually decrease, and cease altogether when the little one is twenty months' old. At any time the foster-parents are at liberty to restore her, or to keep her as their own; in the latter case, her connection with the Foundling Home ceases.

Chinese mother-love! Can it be understood? Is it to be explained when such instances as the following are of commonest occurrence? Think of a mother, to-day, heartbroken for the death of her child, to-morrow assuaging her grief by adopting the babe of another, and immediately able to lavish her affection upon it. "My arms were empty, my body was cold, and now I am comforted."

And many a childless woman adopts a little daughter, superstitiously believing that a girl in the home will encourage the advent of a son, and will usually call her by one of five names—"Duoi-di," "Kaing-di," "Liang-di," "Hi-di," "Pau-di," all variously meaning "Bring brother." Then, when failing her own, a bought son arrives, poor little Bring-brother must mind him, humour him and bear with him, through years of spoilt, boyish capriciousness, and all too soon come to a climax of misfortune in having to marry him. Well indeed will it be for family life in China when the custom of making binding marriage engagements between child and child is a thing of the past. Again, why, when the price of rice rises above the average means of the people, do the owners of rich houses increase their number of slave girls? Because there are parents who can sell their own

children. In the first year of the Republic, when the stress of poverty was very intense, fathers entered the city by all its eight gateways, each carrying a precious burden for sale, to return later on with a heavier purse, but withal most miserably poorer. When food prices are normal, a slave girl is valued, according to her age, at from $15 (£1 10s.) to more than $300 (£30). How grievously parents sin against their own flesh and blood, when, in order to meet a passing emergency, they voluntarily condemn an unfortunate child to a life amongst strangers, who treat her with harshness or kindness, according to her measure of usefulness! Some sayings of every-day usage are painfully instructive in the matter of treatment. "This food is not fit for even a slave girl to eat." "Am I a slave girl to be treated like this?" "Only a slave girl." Only a chattel to be sold and re-sold, according to the circumstances of present owners, and generally in order to pay their debts; a thing of merchandise, purchased with few dollars, kept for some years, passed on at great profit. Recently, when I was visiting a lady who owned a sick little slave, she pointed to her and said quite naturally, "See, nearly wasted. I was counting on her to free me from debt; instead, in trying to heal her, she has been an expense. I have had no luck with her." She was not treating her with special unkindness; just with hardness of manner for being a disappointment and "no-use." The child had been for a while in our hospital, so knew of the "Friend for little children." She fearlessly came to me, stood listening with breathless interest to a glowing description of the Home, where "every one is happy, nor can be happier there." Her eyes seemed to grow big with desire, then suddenly her tiny hand crept into

mine, as she said in all earnestness, "Diau Sister, to-day, now, will you not take me there? I very much long to go at once." Occasionally a bright, willing little slave girl will be so cared for as to take the position of a daughter in the house of her owners, who in time may even provide her with a husband and home; but such cases are rare compared with the many whose only safeguard against over-much cruelty is their value in dollars. From time to time all our mission hospitals receive as patients children who have suffered up to and over the limit of damaging cruelty. And often, when healed from their "Wounds and bruises and putrifying sores," it is hard to have to send them back to their owners, in view of further ill-usage, but there can be no interposition between owner and slave. Although the law of China discountenances the traffic, yet in practice it might as well countenance what it does not prevent. In it the onus of crime must be borne by the parents of slaves, a crime for which there can be no extenuating circumstances; but condemnation will be tempered with mercy by those who remember that the relation between parent and child in this and through past generations lacks, and has lacked that mighty factor of love, which, had it existed, would have made such traffic a moral impossibility!

Even the Foundling Home stands as a protest against it, in ruling that the children it gives for adoption do not become slaves—a humaneness which, unfortunately, does not hold in other outworkings of this institution. In the forenoon of the second and sixteenth day of each month, either the Prefect, or an official from his yamen, sits in the big hall of the Home to administer payments, and nominally inspect the infants, for whose care the money is given. A

few mornings ago, some of us watched these proceedings with saddened interest. We saw over thirty babies carried in, with few exceptions, by men and boys, carelessly held, without any protection from the burning sun. They were all suffering in various degrees from summer distresses; not one was in good condition, and three were clearly dying. Two were brought from the Leper Village, one in the arms of its leper foster-father. Such a pitiful, wailing, helpless company of suffering babes, so woefully motherless and unloved, each one, by her weeping, witnessing to the sad fact that a woman *can* "forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion" upon her.

Poor little womanhood! has heathen China not much room in its vast heart for you? It gives you scant welcome when you arrive; if it decides to allow you to stay, it tolerates you through the years in which you can take your full share in life's daily round; but, if you live to grow old, it may again make you unwelcome, and count it a praiseworthy thing to supply your few wants.

How privileged are those who are allowed to spend an undeservedly favoured womanhood in bringing "Good News" to the few who can be reached, of the wonderful Friend, by Whom Martha and her sister were loved.

CHAPTER VI.

BIRDS, EACH WITH A BROKEN WING.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child"—1 *Cor.* xiii. 11.

ONE would like to know the drift of a child's thoughts in the early days of her arrival in a place where no one speaks harshly and every one welcomes her kindly. Perhaps she is merged in an overwhelming feeling of strangeness, which makes her unable to comprehend the wonderful change from agitation to rest, and from tumult to peace. Long afterwards, when first impressions may be discussed, one listens in vain for rapturous mention of rest, peace and love; these breathe in the atmosphere and are not considered apart from the whole. But to the sense of space, light and largeness, to grace before meals and to hymn singing, there is invariable reference. There are characteristic recollections connected with each child's arrival. Our paralysed Seng-Hu for days gazed wonderingly round with her great, dark eyes, solemnly asking at intervals, "How could it be known that, under the heavens, there was a place like this, a place so good—how could it be known?"

But Uing-Lo̤, as a two-year-old starveling, took a very long time before she could realize that her circumstances had altered. As is the manner of newly blind children, she liked best to sit with her wee face pressed

against a wall, whining and crying in a weak kind of way, pitifully raising her poor little arm, as if to ward off expected blows with the sudden approach of a grown person; and although, after some weeks, the wall was exchanged for a comfortable enfolding in Mi-Seng's arms, it was over a year before she was seen to smile. She is four years old now, a fat, little person, naturally grave, as an outcome of baby-day sorrows, but able to shout with laughter in play and sing hymns with a voice too big for her size.

Sing-Aing had no sooner arrived than she began to learn the house, by feeling all round the walls, and counting the number of steps and paces from place to place. It was she who, after a week of comparative silence, suddenly questioned, "Bible, who is Bible? All day long I am hearing that 'Bible says this' and 'Bible says that'—what person is Bible?"

Hu-Mi was charming in her wondering gratitude. "New clothes all ready for me, rice all cooked for me, not one thing lacking." She at once attached herself to gentle old Mi-Aing, and it was pretty to see the little blind girl and the old blind woman always together, each comforted in the other's company.

Lo-Duoi provided two entertainments, one as tragic as the other was comic.

The tragedy was caused by the removal of cruelly tight bandages from her bruised, crushed feet, with an assurance of well-meant, if mistaken, comfort that never again were her feet to be bound. "Not again bound!" she shrieked. "Take me away. I will not stay here. I must be made pretty. I very much do not want to have big, ugly feet." And the comedy, by her first hearing of hymn-singing at family prayers. This she found so irresistibly ludicrous, that she fairly collapsed in uncontrollable laughter, pure, genuine

amusement, so delightfully infectious that the hymn had to cease and the singers laugh with her.

Two or three of the children have roused the neighbourhood by after-arrival screaming fits—due partly to fear, partly to strangeness, and wholly as vent to a heartful of feelings, not to be rendered in words.

Ning-Hu screamed at intervals through her first weeks for hours on end, made desperate, poor child, by not being able to see where she was, or to speak the same dialect as that of the people around her, not understanding or being understood.

A lively scene occurred, when Li-Sing, a sighted, healthy, ten-year-old orphan, appeared for the first time amongst a set of children, assembled in the guest hall to greet her. She stood holding my hand, but suddenly left me, to dart from one blind child to another, staring straight into each one's eyes, then back to me, shrieking in terrified accents, "Take me out of this place, take me away, my eyes must not be put out. I will not stay here." It was some time before she lost this most natural fear, and for months afterwards, when opposed or offended, she would angrily retort, "You, your eyes should be plucked out," or if the offender was already blind, "You, you no-eyed one, it is good that you are no-eyed."

Now there remains no manner of shrinking in her attitude towards the blind children. She is always ready to help them unselfishly, by an excellent use, on their behalf, of the eyes that were not put out.

Each of the six blind girls sent here from the Ku-tien School, having already experienced a previous "arrival," took naturally to their new surroundings, absorbing the changed dialect without the least effort; and in the case of the little ones, within a very few months, completely forgetting that formerly spoken. Our

first few children were either more difficult to manage than those we have since received, or else we had not then learned the best way in which to deal with them. Also, it is possible that now the first-comers do for the new-comers what we did for them, but with far less effort and better results. Once upon a time, wildly naughty days and lively quarrels were frequent, lessons not learned, knitting needles snapped, wool purposely tangled; and, when occasion demanded, even China's range in a scolding vocabulary was not sufficient to meet the demand. It even became necessary to prohibit an opprobrious usage of the name of Satan and others found equally useful, such as "Beelzebub," "Jezebel," "Judas" and "Pharisee." A scene can be recalled which was humorous enough to temper a just condemnation; Uong-Aing, a child full of spirit and fire, in retaliation for well-deserved rebuke, stood up in her class, to declaim in solemn denunciation, "Get thee behind me, Satan," with heavy emphasis on the name of the personage addressed. Her girl-teacher resenting the appellation, appealed for redress, and received it in limited measure. No discipline proved more effective in bringing to contrition than solitary confinement; but long before the desired result was attained, the culprit relieved her over-charged feelings in a peculiarly Chinese manner. These people, men, women and children are habitual spitters. The action is nothing accounted of; it punctuates speech, is practised here, there and everywhere, with and without provocation. But who spits in school? Should absent-mindedness account for a relapse, immediately educated opinion is expressed in a chorus of "On the clean floor—very much not do!" But the prisoner seized her opportunity in which to make

up for past repression. She stood, and soon in a circle around her an astonishing number of puddles appeared. As they increased, her anger evaporated; slowly, slowly, the penitence came and the hour of release found the poor, sobbing penitent all ready to be good and to prove her repentance by washing the prison floor.

Such scenes belong to past history; they simply could not take place now. Week follows week, when disciplinary needs are all met by mildest reproofs, or, very occasionally, when stormy quarrels rise, an hour of separation; while, for the little ones, plain rice for dinner will fully restore them to the usual happiness. Of course, there are mischievous doings, irresponsible, heedless happenings, with after-effects which may or may not be of consequence. Uong-Ngue, a sighted sprite of a child, is an adept in the art. Last week she operated with a pair of scissors on a sleeping girl's hair, cutting, clipping, according to fancy, all on the uppermost side, dancing in glee at the result of her handiwork, when a shorn Samson woke up in discomfited shyness. More serious consequences followed her pounding the tempting, bare toes of our blind, fat Iu-Hu, who was coming downstairs unsuspectingly towards a laughing Uong-Ngue, in whose hands were a pair of drill dumb-bells; assailed and assailant were very soon crying together, while the mending of the poor pounded toes was a matter of weeks. But her most calamitous act was to poke her wee finger, for fun, into a baby girl's one seeing eye, all but depriving the mite of her last fragment of sight.

It is, however, likely enough that children very seldom actually want to be naughty, or really intend to be so; unfortunately, we big grown-

up people are often too tall to see from their standpoint, so that sometimes the beginning and ending of a lovely adventure have nothing in common at all. Who of the guests at a grand feast of juicy weeds had previously considered a possibility of poisonous harm in the viands so daintily arranged on green leaf plates? Nevertheless, with the happening of a grown-up invasion, those juicy stalks were thrown away, the hands that held them washed and the feasters treated to a precautionary second course, perhaps less unpleasant in taste than the first, but vastly different, for one was pretence and the other dreadfully real. A really serious instance occurred about six years ago. One evening we were amazed to hear that our blind Hu-Mi, then fourteen years old, an earnest, wholehearted, happy girl, had, for some unaccountable reason, procured, prepared, and swallowed a dose of poison powder, not sufficient to kill, but enough to make her look ghastly, as well as to startle the household. She seemed unable to explain her motive, and could only reiterate, "I wanted to go to heaven." When a wondering assembly met for family prayers, on the following morning, Hu-Mi listened to an address which, in a few strong words, dealt with suicide as a breaking of the sixth commandment. She was startled and frightened. Had she sinned like that? From her stool she slipped to the floor in a wordless sobbing. Afterwards, in her own room, she poured out her heart's contrition, and brokenly told the quaint little story: "It was in thinking and thinking of heaven, and very much wanting to be there, I did not consider that going away would make me no longer an in-the-world person, but oh! I had to see what the beautiful Home was like." When she was comforted, she asked that the heathen patients,

at that time under the same great roof, might be gathered together, as she had words of importance to speak to them. Brave child! she stood at the head of the hall, and said, "You have seen me pulled down by the devil; to make myself die, was sin against God, Who gave me life. I confess to you now, that you may know it was not what a Christian should do, and I plead with you to slowly walk on the heaven road with me, to a Home so good that no words can describe it."

Three years later she was taken to the Paradise of her desire, in adoring wonder, and it was as if she said, "I came, and mine eyes hath seen it; and, behold! the half was not told me."

Hu-Mi was a most spiritually-minded child, thought ful and clever. Once, when asked if she could tell when she believed on the Lord Jesus as her own Saviour, she answered, "I believed as soon as I heard His Name; but, not long after I began to worship Him, there was a night when the Devil stood by me and said, 'I am going to kill you.' I awoke in terror, and prayed and prayed. All next day I had no words to speak, nor did I want to sing hymns, but that night I put out strength in prayer and he never came near me in that way again." From her earliest Christian days she could pray aloud. On one occasion, long after the usual bedtime, two women, whose room she shared, were overheard having high words. Was it necessary to intervene? In the waiting moment, a third voice was heard from within, rising higher and higher in prayer for peace between two of God's servants, and soon all was still. Many such stories could be told of this so old, so young and really interesting child. The Bible she learnt by heart, not only in chapters, but books, and when examining herself on

the meaning of their contents, was known to "slap her face to redness" in vexation at not being able to answer all her own questions. The five years for which she was lent to us are full of happy memories. There was cost in giving her back, and yet it is good for the school that its eldest and best should have been taken Home first.

There is a pretty little sentence by George Macdonald which sometimes flits through one's mind when listening to these children at play: "What a power of joy there must be in God to be able to keep so many larks so full of bliss." And the power seems greater when the glad, little larks all have broken wings, and yet can soar up, up into the heights of happiness. This happiness in those whose "broken wing" is blindness is most appealing when play, and movement, do not cease with daylight, but go on just the same when the place of their play is dark as night. Surely, a child's gladness, irrepressible, spontaneous, knowing no bounds, is one of the purest and loveliest things on earth. When Cheng-O, on behalf of the others, comes with some easily granted request, she quivers all over, in an excess of radiant anticipation. That quivering happiness—who has not known it? In memory of the joy it was, let us give it whenever we can. Our few words of assent and approval can matter so very much to an expectant child, therefore spend lavishly; let spirit meet spirit. Why bring an unnecessary cloud into a blue, blue sky, for the bluest sky can become so overcast that, for the time being, there might be no sun at all behind the clouds.

There are times when clouds must gather, but perhaps there are also times when we might keep them from gathering quite so heavily and from becom-

ing so hopelessly black, if we took into better account that, after a very few years, that particular offence would not be a temptation at all.

What an exceedingly important factor the voice becomes in intercourse with the blind! How much more it has to achieve than when helped by the eyes. Its tone must hold all that it can of an unseen smile of approval and encouragement, of pleasure or amusement. It must try to make up for that language of heart, in the eye to eye speech of love, trust and mutual understanding. It must put into set words what a nod or shake of the head, in assent or dissent, would have so easily and simply communicated, and it has always to say aloud what a look could have privately hinted. And yet, voice can be helped out by touch. A little hand-pressure on the shoulder of the person addressed will put more love into words of sympathy, and in exhortation, will soften what might sound too hard in words without looks. These children are quick to discern what the tones of a voice mean it to say, and often one sees a child, who is perhaps conscious of not having been good, brighten visibly when addressed in a tone which does not express disapproval.

Their play games, with some local touches, are very akin to those of home children. Amongst these, the most popular are—dinner parties and feasts, at which China's delectable dainties are served in heaps of flower petals and leaves; buying and selling with tree leaf money; school keeping (on occasions amusing, when in excellent mimicry one's own voice is heard in admonitory remarks); and the acquired "Nuts in May," which, in untiring zest, they sing as "Here we come gathering pretty flowers." The "I am not I" game is no longer encouraged, for

always pretending to be somebody else leads to overmuch fanciful untruthfulness. Once, in the bad old times, a girl, who wanted to be dreadfully naughty, actually personated Satan, "For he has to be bad, and he fears no one," but "Satan" was discovered at morning prayers pinching and poking to tears and to laughter, and was so summarily dealt with that, for once, he did fear, and no one ever wanted to be him again. Most of them know how to act by nature. Dressed up as wandering beggars, their case is wholly pitiable; and as strangers from distant parts, their guileless gazing and artless questioning about the place they have somehow come to, is amusingly clever. Some time ago our attention was drawn to a group of children who, in all earnestness, were acting a beggar's burial, and it gave one a shock to see little Ngu-Aing lying as dead, rolled up in a mat, on the floor, waiting for the moment when the others would carry her away. In response to our words about "the not happy game," the child was unrolled, but she held to her part so well that they had difficulty in making her know she might get up and live.

CHAPTER VII.

TRANSFORMATION.

"The flower thereof was beaten work." — *Ex.* xxv. 31; *Num.* viii. 4.

ONE morning from an upstairs window in our own house I saw a man arrive on the Blind School verandah with a child in his arms, where he was met by a few of the elder girls. He stood and evidently asked them to tell him the rules of admission. Immediately their voices rang out in a bright, quick chorus of sentences, "Here it is very good to be! No hard admission rules at all! You need only be blind, only be hunchbacked, only be paralysed, lame-footed, crooked-handed, and you will be received!"

Only blind! only paralysed! Children dear, are you so happy here that even your maiming seems but a little thing?

Thus wondering, I went down to take over the interview, for which the man followed me to our hall. As he placed his burden on a chair, in a little crumpled heap, some women appeared, one of whom came forward and said, "We, to-day, have brought you this eight-year-old cripple as a deed of merit. Will you receive her? She has no parents, no one to mind her." I looked from her to the child and caught such a likeness between them that there was only one answer to make, "You give away your own child!" A gasp from the others, "Eyes that sharp!" But the woman just burst into tears and sobbed out her story:

" She is ill, always ill; her stepfather hates her. I am out working all day long; he earns nothing. How can I bear to see her so miserably neglected? "

One could hardly doubt her sincerity, but it seemed best to receive the child only as a guest, until we had tried to verify the account.

Poor little deserted guest! She buried her face on her arms and would have none of us. Women and children told her in vain to " Cheer heart " and " Not fear." After a while they went away and the gentle, paralysed Seng-Hu was called to sit with her. Seng-Hu, with tears of sympathy in her great dark eyes, looked at her and said, " Little sister, I, too, cannot walk straight, but my heart is all peace, the Lord Jesus, Saviour, is here. He will put peace in your heart." This appeal met with immediate response in bitter exasperation, " You, you one-legged, crooked-handed thing, go away, go away from my presence."

Then an inevitable happening occurred, made possible by the terror-smitten condition of the astonished victim. For somebody, big and loving, swooped upon her, carried her to a tub of warm water, swiftly deprived her of garments which, nipped up with the tongs, found a well-deserved end in the fire; their owner, feeling like any one but herself, was given the first bath of her life, from which she emerged chastened and clean, to be dressed in another child's clothes and fed with hot milk. This poor child was only able to stand for a moment holding on to something, and the position in which she found most ease was in leaning from her chair on to a stool placed in front of her. She spent her first weeks in a corner of the big drill-hall, because it was cool and the children played there; but she allowed none of them near her, and always

looked lonely and uncomfortable. Seng-Hu, in unremitting kindness, unremittingly repulsed, would retreat from a storm of abuse, patiently commenting, "I the sorriest for her, I the most hated by her." The others brought out their treasures to show her; but dolls, beads and bugles were of no avail; she only wanted her mother. All day long her face was turned towards the entrance from the street; surely her mother would come for her, or was she in very deed a "not-wanted" child? The thought made her cry continually, her tearful fretting alternating with storms of anger, expressed in untranslatable language. No one could please and nothing appeased her. Three times a day, when a bowl of nice fresh milk was brought to her, she swallowed it in gulps, then gravely returned the bowl with a scornful mutter of "nastily smelling milk." At meal time the same thing occurred; her rice, with its condiments, disappeared with a quick clicking of chopsticks, and was finished to an accompaniment of choice remarks about "tasteless vegetables and not-fit-to-eat rice."

One day, amongst a company of visitors, she saw her mother, and not a word was she able to say. They looked at each other and silently cried. Then, Chinese-like, the mother exhorted her heart-sore little daughter to be good and obedient and soon went away.

Then Luing-Gi realized her motherlessness, and the woman who had left her without one word of comfort might well have been haunted by the "exceeding bitter cry" which followed her retreating footsteps. The incessant wailing continued for days in desperate sadness: "I am not willing to be by her thrown away. I must go home. Why can I not walk? Carry me, carry me away," until, wearied with hopeless struggling, she subsided into silent moroseness. We tried

in vain to make an arrangement whereby she could have been kept at home, but her stepfather, a gambler and worse, threatened so horribly that his poor wife, for the child's own sake, was thankful to give her away.

After about a month there were times when the children could play with her, and one morning a set of them delightedly brought a request from Luing-Gi for some beads. Pleased with the advance, we brought her a little box full of them. She received it most gravely, opened it, and with her fine fingers picked out a few, carefully closed it and, in a manner of quaint condecension, handed it back with the quiet remark, "Of your beads, I now have enough." When she accepted a doll, dressed as a Chinese lady, she relented still further. The "Chinese lady" became an indicator of her owner's moods: cross, and the doll utterly unclothed was hidden in disgrace behind her; contented, and she was dressed in all her best; happy, and she was made to display her accomplishments. Thus a breaking-in went on, until one evening she yielded for good and all. It was at bedtime, after she had taken her milk and after my little prayer with her, that she suddenly said, "Diau Sister, goo what." "Is it good-night, Luing-Gi?" "It is, it is," she exclaimed. "That is what all the others say." "Goo-nigh, my Diau Sister, thank you for the milk you give me thank you very much; say goo-nigh to new Diau Sister [1] for me." "My own little Luing-Gi, are you good to love now?" I questioned. "Yes, yes," she answered. . . "The not-good-to-love one has quite gone away."

"For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear . . . the time of the singing

[1] The children's name for my sister, who was then staying here.

of birds is come" (Song of Solomon ii. 11, 12). "The flowers appear," they open in sunshine. Luing-Gi grew stronger and straighter, able to stand, walk, and play. The poor rounded back is a "needs be," but suffering no pain of body or mind, she is healthy and normal, a flower-like child, sensitive, responsive and loving.

With the change, who was so wanted as Seng-Hu? And Seng-Hu, in learning most limited, was proud when called on to teach, first, their dear "Jesus loves me" hymn, and then all she knew. Later on, hoping that treatment would make them both better, we sent them to hospital together. How they welcomed our constant visits; they had so much to say, and were so full of their own little tricks and jokes. One evening, finding them somewhat subdued, Seng-Hu explained, in her solemn, deep voice, "The person who was in this bedroom with us has gone away, and Luing-Gi says she will cry if we must sleep alone, but I have commanded her not to fear, for I will be with her, and not only I, but also the Lord Jesus Christ."

Needless to say, their faith was not put to the test, though had it been tried, such comforting assurance would have kept them both trustingly happy. Poor little Seng-Hu! She will never be able to use her right hand, and must always be dreadfully lame. In brain power she is also below the average, but she is one of Christ's own little ones. The winning of Luing-Gi was mainly due to her persistent unselfishness. She came here five years ago, having already "eaten her fill of sorrow," accounting for her many bruises and sores by plaintively saying, "My relations were not willing that I should live in the world; they often did things to kill me; but no matter how much they hurt me, I always got well." One of them, perhaps in kindness,

1. "I TOO CANNOT WALK STRAIGHT."
2. "ORCHID OF LOVE."
3. "A SIGHTED SPRITE" WITH SUGAR CANE.
4. "CRY-CRY" AND THE "PATIENT BABY."

brought her to the Blind Village, and left her standing at its entrance, thrown on the mercy of strangers. Amongst those strangers was one who knew her Lord's will. Guang-Seng took the poor child to her home, and after some days led her to us.

Last January, deep down in the coarse, rough leaves of an orchid plant, a little hard bud appeared. We watched it growing so slowly, we sheltered and cared for it continually, guarding it from night frosts and all that might hurt. For long it remained tightly closed; then, suddenly, early in May, a loosening began, sheaths were quickly unfolded, warm winds and sun played with the soft-tinted petals, and set free from a tall, graceful stem a flower of rare and delicate beauty—a triumph of loveliness in a setting of torn, seared leaves. Was it a play of fancy to liken that orchid to Luing-Gi? Her name, Luing-Gi, means orchid, and soon at her baptism she will change it to Luing-O, "Orchid (of) love," as a happy reminder of a true little allegory. "A flower of beaten work," gentle and patient, her face, perhaps, expressive of sadness, but oftimes lit up by sunniest smiling. Not long ago somebody said to me, "Luing-Gi is most good to love and the words of her mouth are always sweet."

It is beautiful to see so complete a change, and it encourages patient dealing with each little child who is brought to us. Some children are naturally good; they have not been in the habit of lying, stealing and swearing, and so have no difficulty in adapting themselves to a place where such things are known as sin. Others, less favoured in character and circumstances, having had to fend for themselves and live by their wits, do not "keep their hands from picking and stealing," nor their tongues "from evil speaking, lying and slandering." Even with such as

these, I doubt if it is well to begin by treating their lying and stealing as punishable sins, or to let them think they are sinners, suddenly placed in the midst of saints.

When Su-Siu came here last winter she was the nippiest little eight-year-old thief imaginable. She had some sight in one eye, a fact which placed the both-eye-blind children at great disadvantage, especially at meal-times when, with real dexterity, she slipped many a tit-bit from their bowls to her own. No doubt the losers scolded her well, but otherwise we left her alone and waited for conscience to act, hoping that a sense of unfitness would lead to a casting off of bad ways, like the discarding of arrival clothes rags, with entrance to clean, bright surroundings. Su-Siu responded happily to this plan and now, it is said, that "her hands do not wander and she is exceedingly good for play." She has an attractively humorous face, is brown all over, as if stained with fresh walnut juice—the ingrain of sunburn which scrubbing can bring to no lighter shade. Like Seng-Hu, she must have held tightly to life, for, from head to foot, she is marked with scars of past beatings, and, like Seng-Hu, although not wanting in average intelligence, she shows no desire to excel in book-learning.

She owes her life to "a certain Samaritan," the teacher of a village day-school, who, one mid-winter day, heard of a castaway, dying slave, lying on the road-side under some straw. Quick to tell all heathen around that "the love of God is broader than the measures of man's mind," he went straight to the child and carried her, just as she was, indescribably dirty and very ill, to die, as he thought, tended and cared for in his own home. His mother and wife did all in their power to win back her strength, and

gave thanks when their efforts were crowned with success. Su-Siu did not repay them, for nothing that could be eaten was safe from her small thievish fingers; yet, dressed in their own boy's clothes, they kept her for weeks, while they negotiated with her former owners and communicated with us. But their reward is sure. Aing-Mi did not pass by on the other side, as every heathen man and woman in the village would have done; he proved his Christlikeness; he bore witness to the love of his God; and surely one day he will hear, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least . . . ye have done it unto Me." And his Christlike act will (and I say it in faith) work to the saving of a soul, with all that a saved soul must mean in the Kingdom of God, down through the ages to come.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE OF THE CHILDREN AND THEIR WAYS.

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them."—*Isa.* xlii. 16.

IS there any special reason why a short, fat, square person should not be very highly strung and extremely sensitive? Or, why should such a temperament be connected, as it often is, with slenderness of form and wistfulness of face? Does the spirit, in such a temperament, refuse to be clothed upon with a body of robust sturdiness, and insist upon one of fragile litheness which may hide within it a fair amount of wiry strength? Whatever the cause may be, the fact remains that its discovery in what appears as a ill-matched body can, by its unexpectedness, prove a source of constant surprise.

A species of sensitive plant grows freely in the stoniest places in this garden, so ordinary to look at that it might easily be mistaken for a common weed. But touch it and see. Before your finger is on it, it quivers, and instantly each little leaflet droops and folds itself up and remains closed until gradually it recovers from the shock.

This is just like our fifteen-year-old Cu-Aing, and, from her appearance, what one would least expect, for she is very short, broad and fat, though very sensitive, refined and nervous. Six years ago, when her father brought her to the Blind Village, she immediately became the property of a blind man, who, for two and a half months, dragged her out on begging expeditions, then suddenly departed, leaving his small wife to fend for herself. As she was quite unable to do this, we were soon asked to keep her until his return. When month after month passed by, bringing no tidings of him, the women grew hopeful, and said, "What happiness for the child should he have gone for good!" Then rumours came of his death, his people spoke of re-marriage, but we intended to keep her here.

Guang-Seng, well skilled in difficult dealings, went off in a chair to Cu-Aing's own home, a distance of twenty miles, and there roused her father to instant action, inviting him to the city, where he, we and the man's relatives negotiated to purpose, for her father willingly signed his child away to the foreigners for a bonus loan of four dollars.

Now, our glad little widow, in exuberant spirit, combined a very thorough goodness with plenty of romping wildness. We called her "The mountain goat," for black hair, when refusing the restraint of plaits, hung over her face in shaggy locks.

One day, in the knitting hour, when all the children chatted, Cu-Aing sighed a long, long sigh, and said in a plaintive voice, "Oh, I wish I had been born in Judea; I wish I had been born a Jewess; and then I, too, might have been blessed and good." She was already blessed, and was still more blessed when she took her baptismal vows and in daily things lived out her

steadfast resolve: "I will endeavour so to do, God being my helper." The others say, "How could Cu-Aing not be good, with twenty-one mothers [1] all praying for her?" And no doubt the thought of her "mothers" praying, and their loving care in providing the clothes she wears, their messages to her and occasional letters, signed with their names, is ever to her a strong incentive to do her very best in the Christian walk, as she presses onward and upward to meet them in the Home above; for there the prayed-for will understand how much of the blessing which blessed them on earth they owe to their "praying mothers."

Cu-Aing was ours for two and a half years, when, to every one's consternation, her long-lost husband returned, and one day, with his uncle, calmly appeared to claim her. Should our happy Christian child again become the property of a disreputable beggar man, some twenty years older than herself? Praying for power, we began the interview: How long had he owned her as wife? Less than three months. How long had he left her without provision? Over two years. Was that in accordance with China's correct principle? As he now proposed to take her away, was he also prepared to refund her maintenance during the time of his absence? Then, from another standpoint: Was he less concerned for her welfare than her father had been? Was he in a position to provide for and protect her through life? No? Then why not do righteously: leave her where she was cared for in every respect, and save her from miserable conditions. Should such a "pity heart" be within him,

[1] Her supporters and intercessors—a "mothers' meeting" in Ireland.

CU-AING AND SENG-CHENG

LO-DUOI SPINNING.

JOHN'S FATHER WITH HIS GRANDSON.

let him prove it at once by signing a written statement, relinquishing all his claim upon her. " Initial expenses a feast spread at her entrance ? " was muttered, as if in inquiry. " Even that shall be repaid, when the matter is concluded." Whereupon the old uncle loudly announced, " The amount was four thousand cash." " Good, four big dollars ; sign ! Willing, not willing ? Sign ! " And in less than five minutes the deed was done.

The uncle then asked for Cu-Aing but Cu-Aing was not to be found, until an authoritative call brought a shivering, grimy, white-faced child from behind the kitchen stove. A whispered " Be glad, they have given you to us," flooded her face with colour. Half-laughing, half-crying, she stood in the hall, a shaggy little sweep. " Speak to them," called Guang-Seng, but words could not come, only a gentle greeting of " Peace." The old man looked at her closely, felt over her cheeks, arms and hands, then said, as he followed his nephew away, " She does well to be here, truly, exceedingly well to be here."

This happened four years ago, and now the man we deprived of a wife is suitably settled in marriage, we trust, to his satisfaction.

In concluding this episode, it may be said that Cu-Aing is the only child we have for whom one cent has been paid ; the others have come all unsought for and given. As a grown girl now, she is charmingly lovable. Sensitive to a fine degree, encouraged, discouraged, made sad, made glad, simply by voice inflection ; extremely highly strung, ascending to heights of delight, descending to depths of sorrow for veriest trifles. Join in a game of " Nuts in May," and if you happen to take her hand it will quiver in yours with thrills of suppressed excitement.

In the children's storm-cloud quarrels that break just now and then, she steals away to hide in some quiet corner until they are safely over, unless concerned in them, when her penitent grief lasts long after peace has come. These quarrels are simple affairs. One side asserts with every breath, "Yes so, yes so, yes so!" The other denies in pauseless haste, "Not so, not so, not so." The "yes so, not so," duet might go on for ever and ever, but the finale is usually a very sudden, sharp, surprised "Children!"

Cu-Aing is distressingly nervous. There are times when she tries to answer in class and cannot utter a sound; her hands are squeezed and wrung, her face is hot. In mercy, pass on, or answer it for her. And yet, her appearance denies these nervous characteristics. Study a line of blind faces during a service in Church: one is keenly attentive, another quietly listening, one decidedly sleepy, another restlessly twitching, but the expression on Cu-Aing's face is grave and heavy and solid.

Thirteen-year-old Uong-Aing comes next to Cu-Aing in age, and in appearance as well as temperament is her opposite. She is delicate, small, thin, spirited, daring and plucky. She displayed her daring and pluck the very first time we saw her, over five years ago. One day at the Leper Village we saw on one of the men's big chairs an apparently dying child—a little heap, swollen from head to foot, both eyes quite blind, one dreadfully sore, bulging from the eyelid. She was burning with fever and breathing with difficulty. A stranger came forward, and somebody said, "See, her mother-in-law, sad and much to be pitied; in bringing the child to this place she has spent time and money. Will you take her and heal her? If not, she will let her be." The woman came forward and

shouted her tale of misfortune, for doubtless a foreigner understands best when the speaker infers she is deaf. "Indeed my life has no luck; no one has troubles like mine; you can accumulate merit by taking pity on me." Pity *her*! when the poor little girl she owns lies before us in such an appalling condition of neglected misery! On occasions like this, one needs to remember that hearts without knowledge of God can be hard and cold and dark, or else one would answer hardness with hardness. But gentleness may awaken desire for something this world cannot give.

"To receive her into your house are you willing?" We looked again at the child. Was she not dying then? We turned and whispered, "Too late, we fear; too late." But a voice from the chair, yes, and startlingly clear, said, "No, no, I must, I will go with you; were it not for the pain in my eyes there is nothing the matter at all." Brave, spirited child! But what were the horrors she sought to escape by pleading protection with strangers? Only that day she had heard these words from the woman to whom she belonged, "As sure as I have to bring you back, I will drown you in the river, or else I will leave you outside at night, to let the tigers eat you." Strength returned to her slowly, and indeed she may never be strong; but, unless when really very ill, she will still maintain, "With me there is nothing the matter at all." She is a decidedly interesting child, thoughtful and very clever, but nothing describes her so well as the one word "merry." Her chuckling, ringing laugh, a rippling happy sound, is deliciously sweet school music.

In each of the children's stories and ways there are special points of interest, while the words "saved from," "saved to," cover them every one.

Saved to serve the Lord Jesus, now, here in family life, where they are manifestly His disciples, and then (fulfilling our aim) out in surrounding villages where their homes make centres of light.

The elder girls have not much to choose between their lessons and play ; either can be thoroughly enjoyable. Learning is easy to them because, with few exceptions, they have good ability, good concentration and enviable memories. Of course there is one who excels all round ; in whatever she undertakes, from housework to books, from books to music, she always has to be best, and best without being conceited or envied by the others. Our most correct Mi-Hu, with seldom a hair astray, is yet not too good, too prim, too anything else, only just perfectly right. She has failed, however, in growing tall, and although quite well and strong, is small, by many sizes, for her seventeen years of age. Her special feature is stillness, an immovability of expression ; in moments of utter intentness she might almost be asleep. In this, she is most unlike her comrade Cheng-O, whose face is bewitchingly tell-tale, moved with the mood of the moment.

The blind, unlike the sighted, have not the luxury of books all ready for their use. The making of books is a part of the work that goes on all the time. They write them in Braille type from dictation, with a speed quite equal to an average English writer, and now are able to bind them themselves in strong and simple fashion.

Chinese New Year and summer heat determine two terms for a school year. In each term these girls write out and thoroughly learn a book of the Bible. For repetition, the seniors write and learn the Collects, Epistles and Gospels ; the juniors, the " one hundred texts " ; and both juniors and seniors

DENG-HU, TEACHING THE LITTLE ONES.

SUE-AING.

MRS. DR. NGUOI.

twelve new hymns. Of secular subjects, they like to follow, as far as possible, the course for sighted children, but in this they have to accept limitations. Drill, with hoops, poles or dumb-bells, taught by Miss Phillips for the past two years, has shown them that drill can be a spirited, healthful exercise, combining pleasure and profit.

The daily needlework hour is good for body and mind, but what "taste" has it now compared with those months when "New Diau Sister" took it in hand and taught them to patch and make their own clothes, as if they were seeing people? Then, the hour was quite too short for the work and fun and chat.

This year "musical notation" has been an absorbing interest to our four harmonium players. The Braille system is cleverly simple, a matter of learning some sixty signs, twenty-eight of which, representing the diatonic scale in the different kinds of notes, suffice here. It dispenses with clefs, lines and spaces, dealing instead with octaves and intervals. Now, in one hour the girls can take down four or five hymn tunes from dictation and read them with perfect ease.

Possibly, no one of the family has been saved from such a depth of degradation as blind Deng-Hu, the little ones' teacher. She is faithful and painstaking, and manages to impart a fair amount of knowledge to small people who would rather be playing about. And who so patient as she, in guiding wee fingers into the mysteries of Braille reading and writing, always best learned by the blind from the blind. Deng-Hu is twenty-eight years of age, a sensitive woman and given to introspection, almost too grateful for kindness, unhappily hurt by slights, whether imaginary or real. This used to lead to difficult times of moroseness, with occasional outbreaks of temper;

but she knows how to overcome them, and now, for more than a year, has not once been conquered. She is a Ku Tien salvation, a not-wanted daughter-in-law, given away to a criminal condemned for life within the prison walls, where she lived with him for over two years in surroundings which do not bear thinking of. Then, grudging her maintenance, he sent the poor blind girl away, and she lived for a while as the lowest of outcasts. In this condition Miss Codrington was appealed to on her behalf, and received her, at the age of sixteen, in a state of mental, moral and physical degradation, into that most blessed mission home, which saw in her yet another miracle of healing. After three years she was baptized, after two more confirmed, and then she came to this school—a learner for three years. She then became a worker amongst heathen patients in our hospital, and now after four years is back again teaching in this school, contented and happy and useful, only desiring to live to the praise of His glory.

CHAPTER IX.

WOMEN WORKERS AND THEIR WORK.

"Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished."—*St. Luke* xxiv. 22.

THE ministry of Bible-women in this Church is of inestimable value. All that St. Paul said of Phœbe, Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis and others is equally true of "the women that publish the tidings" here. They are home missionaries in a beautifully literal sense, Chinese to Chinese, in agreement of mind, presenting their message in a manner most readily understood. Without their loyal and all-important co-operation, we women-missionaries would win but a little way into heathen hearts and homes; and would often be unable to comprehend clearly the motives and inner workings in cases with which we deal. They help us over the barrier of our indubitable foreignness in look, word and deed.

Who are they, these leaders amongst their Christian sisters? They stand in bold relief against a background of heathen darkness, detached from home ties, and who, though not unmarried, are free to "attend upon the Lord without distraction."

No woman is appointed as Bible-woman away from her home who should be in it, fulfilling her wifely, motherly duties; but these are Bible-women because, through stress of home circumstances, poverty, widow-

hood, unfortunate, wicked, or vanished husbands, they are free to be set apart for a life of usefulness in the Church; and perhaps, having experienced sorrow and trouble, they are the better qualified for service to others.

To know a woman as a heathen, to see her turning towards the Light, believing, accepting salvation, seeking for fuller knowledge, coming to be taught, concentrating all her learning powers upon the Word of God, going from strength to strength, rising above her fellows, becoming able to lead and teach, to share responsibility as a friend and co-worker—is there greater joy than this for a missionary? It is an indescribable privilege.

Eight years ago, Sue-Aing, Church-mother, begged the position of Blind School cook for a niece from a distant village, whose gambling husband was "no use" and unable to support her. The proposal was not readily accepted—a Christian was more desirable than an unknown heathen stranger! But the leading came to take her, and had it not been followed, how very disappointing it would have been to One Who planned her as a gift to us and to the Church.

In due time Sue-Aing appeared, with Cuing-Mi, a fresh, fat, frightened country girl of twenty-one, who, hopelessly silent and afraid to move from her aunt's side, expected the foreigner's questions to be translated to her and answered for her.

The sentence, "Ask my aunt," recalls subsequent interviews, when, without Sue-Aing, she stood balancing herself on bound, three-inch-long feet, backing from her questioner, looking for wall support, saying in hot, blushing shyness, "Fear I cannot hear understandingly, please ask my aunt."

There was nothing unusual in her past history. She was a motherless child, given away as a daughter-

in-law when seven years old. Her husband, a witless, young vagrant, more often away from home than in it, left his wife under the rigorous rule of a hard-hearted aunt. At the age of nineteen, she was given a child of her own, but the little one only lived a few weeks, and the hearts that might have softened towards a boy's mother were hardened against her as causing ill luck. She was in a state of sullen indifference, when Sue-Aing, Church-mother, in the midst of a preaching tour, was able to visit her village, sent doubtless by the Master in the working out of His purpose for her.

For two and a half years she excelled as school cook; then, willing to forego wage-earning, she entered the Women's School and became a slow but earnest and steady learner. She spent holiday times with her now improved but still irresponsible husband, who was employed as gardener by the Rev. H. S. Phillips, and was therefore under instruction. Then, in her third year of study, she was smitten with mortal illness, beyond human skill for healing. And yet, ever in prayer, these words rang clear, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," and the assurance of coming healing was so strong and unvarying that a decisively uttered "recovery hopeless" brought but a thrill of inner triumph. Now we can "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." When actually counted as dying, her relations took her away from our care, and, as a last resource, tried Chinese measures for her recovery.

Then, independent of any measures, we saw the Hand of God laid on her for restoration; and a few months later she returned to school for further teaching; in due time completed the Bible-women's full four years' course of study, which, besides other subjects, includes the Bible from Genesis to Ruth, Isaiah, St.

Matthew to Romans, Ephesians, Hebrews and The Revelation.

Her eyes are somewhat damaged, and she cannot read for long, and only in good light. But the Master wonderfully compensated her for what He took away in her illness; and the eyes, now dimmed to this world's sunlight, have seen their glorious vision in the revealing of a suffering Saviour's love to her and to the world. "Lord, I was blind; I could not see. . . . But now the beauty of Thy Face in radiant vision dawns on me."

Those months of weary illness, that waiting on the threshold of the glorious Beyond, were planned in tender love, as blessed and needed preparation for her happy service now. It is indeed a going from strength to strength.

Our women's weekly prayer-meeting has a membership of about twenty-five of our own workers, wives of catechists, teachers and doctors. Formerly the missionary presided, but early this year we asked that for the future the members themselves, Chinese and foreign, old and young, should each in turn undertake the leadership. The suggestion was accepted by the women with trepidation, which readily found expression. "Fear will make me dumb; as a wooden head I shall stand before all." "Eyes, looking towards me, one person, I will fear unto shaking, fear unto death." "I, knowing so little, to stand and teach others, how could I be so bold?" "Fright will dim my eyes to not reading, will shake my knees to not standing, making me very ashamed." "I am young, Sisters, and long-time worshipping-God people sitting, arranged in rows before me, my courage how could it be so great?"

Proving a willingness to take this onward step in their Christian walk, nearly each one has come for-

ward in her turn, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," but proving King David's words, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."

Cuing-Mi, in her first attempt, reminded us of past "Ask my aunt" days. She stood on the little platform, with crimson face and cast down eyes. She announced a hymn, but when it was sung the ensuing silence frightened her more; again and again, when she tried to speak, nothing would come but little coughs. With an appealing look she pleaded, "Diau Sister, please for me pray." Then, when we were all reseated, she was able to read her few chosen verses and give a simple and helpful address. Nine months later, her turn came again, and this time fearfulness was under control, and she led with a quiet lack of self-consciousness; the prayer-time showed that the thoughts she had given from her text, "I, the prisoner in the Lord," had stirred her to greater willingness for suffering service. Blind Guang-Seng is seldom nervous. She sees no alarming audience, prepares very thoroughly, and is always searching, fresh and strong in teaching and prayer. In her last address she was quaintly original in her designation of St. Paul and the other Apostles as "Mr. Paul" or "Apostle Mr. Peter." When Guang-seng is asked to speak, to undertake an itineration, or some difficult piece of work, she never questions the request, but takes it as a message from God, and naturally expects Him to help His messenger.

No leader has yet been quite so nervous as Uong-Hu. She has always found it difficult to express herself with coherence. Her prayerful determination carried her through a three years' course of study in the Women's School. At first she grew hot and tearful in the unsuccessful answering of simple questions,

but gradually gained confidence and assurance with her teacher. But, to lead a prayer-meeting! "Diau Sister! you know my stupidity, my mouth is not like the mouth of others, truly, it is no use." When we entered the "Worship Room," she was seated amongst the assembled members with her head bent low. At a whispered assurance of certain help, she looked up and said, "Yes, but the platform. I cannot go on the platform." So, just where she was, she stood up, and in a wonderfully clear, low voice gave the little address, her very nervousness sending her words to our hearts. Never again will it cost her so much. Uong-Hu has since been appointed as Blind School matron, sharing daily responsibility and proving surprisingly able to use her once "no-use mouth" in all necessary speakings. Even to women who have come through a girls' boarding school from childhood, it is an ordeal to lead this prayer-meeting. Mrs. Dr. Nguoi confessed to sleepless nights beforehand, but for those who a few years ago knew nothing at all, not even the rudiments of reading and writing, it is a greater ordeal still, and therefore a grander proving of God's strength "made perfect in weakness."

Heathen house visiting is a difficult and important part of a Bible-woman's work. It needs initiative, courage and faithful perseverance. It is not the easier routine of work at one's hand, but a voluntary going out as a messenger, sent with a Message to people, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear."

As Chinese houses have no windows which open towards the road, but only doors which are usually closed, a street of houses looks thoroughly self-protected against invasion. But there is always hope that at some open door a group of women may be standing, who, seeing two messengers coming along, will want

to hear their Message, for the heathen know quite well that they come to speak of the God they worship. Then, if the group does not retreat behind a hastily bolted door, a smiling woman stands and, in her Chinese form of "How do you do?" asks if they have eaten their dinner. In ready assent they return the greeting, which leads to a conversation not unlike the following.

"You are out to preach. Where are you going? Here not many to listen."

"We, to-day, have brought you very Good News. Have you got time to hear it?"

"Altogether no time, and the words you speak we do not understand."

"Not understand? Can understand if you carefully listen. This 'Good News' concerns you; it tells of salvation and life everlasting. Have you heard of One True God? Have you heard of the Saviour, Lord Jesus?"

"No, here we are stupid, cannot understand; we seldom come from within the house to play at the outside door. Now must go in; you have wearied yourselves with speaking."

Accepting dismissal, they announce the next "Great Worship Day" date, and earnestly invite them to come and "See worship," whereupon a too ready acceptance mingles in with their parting call, "Will go, will go; slowly, slowly walk on."

It is possible to spend a whole afternoon thus seeking for hearers without obtaining an entrance to even one house. But, and happily often, there are visiting days, described here as "Good opportunities," when ladies, out "seeing the world" from their own house doors, are pleased to welcome the "Sent ones," and answer the greeting remarks with a hearty "Have

time, have time, come inside and sit." But the guest hall they enter empties like magic before them. "A foreigner! Who had the courage to ask her?" Then the hostess comes back and little girls carry cups of tea for her guests, who rise to take it, careful to use both hands and murmur as thanks "Carried to weariness," to which she responds in an equal politeness, "Cold, not-good-to-eat tea." This act of commonplace ceremony restores equanimity, and the women and children of various families return, to stand at some distance and whisper remarks. Then, taking the lead, we invite all to listen quietly, and immediately tell of the Saviour. Yes, no one is moving, all are attending. "Oh! in this moment of silence, Holy Spirit, open their minds and wing the words to their hearts!" There are questions; the stillness is past. "God, can we see Him?" "You, have you seen Him?" "Can He answer a call?" "Is there money to pay?" "What! free salvation and only heart worship? No incense, no waving of hands and nothing to see?" "Is there no sorrow, no sickness?" etc.

Then objections follow as quickly: "This thing we cannot do. How have we time to play one day in seven? Our food we must earn. We cannot read books. Too old, too stupid, too poor," etc. Questions, objections, arguing! but almost always in such a company there is longing in somebody's eyes. The awakening of souls? The moving towards life? God grant it. A sudden noisy clamour may hasten the close of the visit, for preaching cannot continue when the audience becomes loquacious, or through a concert of infant crying, or when family dogs bark and snap off outsiders, or a fine young cock raises his voice and crows the loudest of any at too close quarters. Or

more disturbing still, the men appear and whisper words which frighten the women, or cause them to laugh and scatter. But, it is hopelessly final if a haberdasher walks in with a load of delightful things described as "Foreign"—mirrors, which caricature to perfection; pearl buttons, "with holes in their centres," pale pink and blue socks for twopence a pair, guaranteed to give excellent wear, brooches all gold, and flowers all silk, ribbons and real floss silks. While the tempting array is being displayed the messengers take their leave, the hostess and others this time at the door, to speed them and urge in repeated calls, "Soon come again, in a few days come; we much like to hear the preaching." Sometimes visiting days bring a fullness of joy and cheer, when the time seems all too short for telling the wonderful story, because there are those who listen, as if they had waited all their lives, till this moment to hear it. Then the children are hushed to silence, no one allowed to hinder, and they "put out strength" to understand the mystery of mighty Love, as told in St. John iii. 16. It is lovely to watch a saved Chinese sister pouring out the Gospel story—how the Saviour lived, His miracles, death, resurrection and ascension—and to catch the gasps of surprise, sorrow and wonder as she leads from point to point, so aptly using God's Word for the answering of their questions.

The Bible-woman, in her turn, is hostess to the companies of ladies, who often come to "play in the foreigner's upper storey." Among these there are those who only want to see; those who only want to hear; those who want to both see and hear. The first will wander from place to place and exclaim again and again, in two short words, "How bright and clean and beautiful; how spacious and how light!"

It is well to let them wander, see all there is to see, but keep the "upper storey" as the last, best place on view, in the hope that they will like to rest and listen for awhile. The harmonium and a simple chorus are often helpful then.

Those who intend to see and hear are certainly the most numerous, and good it is to give them more than they came to get. They see the blind girls reading Bible stories; they see them play the harmonium and sing "the songs of heaven." They see "unwanted" children cared for, free and happy, and wonderingly they watch them and learn that "God is Love." And they go away declaring, "Indeed we will come again, for to-day there has not been time enough to see and hear to the full."

A visitor, struck with a sense of space in the big, plain drill-hall where some little ones were playing, said thoughtfully, "You foreigners are rich, and therefore can build these houses and act righteous deeds of pity; while we, the people of China, have no money to spare at all, so live in poor, dark houses, and cannot for merit show mercy."

To this the Bible-woman answered at once, "Aunt, not so, not so! We Chinese also have money, and we spend it in building temples, far grander than these schools, then put dead idols in them, row upon row of wood-carved, clay-made, no-life things. But the money God gives our sisters builds houses where children live to grow up and serve the living Lord."

It is a rare delight when visitors come who only want to hear. They set themselves to take in the teaching and learn by heart like children. Not long ago, an old, old lady listened with keen intelligence, and when she stood up to go, announced with fine decision, "This is what I have heard here to-day, and

never must I forget it : The Creator, God, is my Father, the Son of God is my Saviour, the Holy Spirit is my Comforter." And she walked slowly away, repeating aloud, to the tap of her quaint, long stick, " My Father, my Saviour, my Comforter, I must not forget, never forget ; my Father, my Saviour, my Comforter."

CHAPTER X.

FROM SEED-TIME TO HARVEST.

"The land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God seeketh after."—*Deut.* xi. 11, 12 (R.V. margin).

THE Bible-women mentioned already as learning to sow and to reap, in their corner of God's field, are only beginners in work, compared with those proved and faithful workers in other places, who through many a year have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Come for a chair-ride of thirteen miles in the fullness of harvest-time, and see such a reaper at work in the district of Ciong-Bau.

Away from the city, we ferry over the river, and soon there stretches before us a great far-reaching lake of golden, ripened rice. Between the mountains it is joined by bowing bamboo trees, with their long sweeping frond and luxuriant growth of green; here and there is a spiræa tree, in an overflow of flower. Then the mountains recede, and the lake of colour becomes a billowy sea of rustling, musical motion. Where the break of a valley comes in the mountain side there is a spring, which waters what looks like a river of amber-coloured rice, which grows in ridges, and rustles in the wind with a sound of gently trickling water. There are miles and miles of bountiful harvest waiting

for reaping, not only in one region, but all over this garden province. Follow the lake up to its end, and by a long ascent of steps cross over its boundary mountain, but before descending the other side stand on the top-most level, look on, look back, over ranges and ranges of mountains, near and far, clothed with beautiful coloured things. Under the bluest heaven, in a sunlit blaze of glory, a quivering haze lies like a veil which gently rises and falls, as if the hills, in their mighty strength, were living, moving and breathing. In the valleys groups of dark, island villages appear, in which the people depend on the lake of rice for their food. There are paths through the rice, and sometimes we come to elaborate roofed bridges in which there are seats for travellers. In these bridges there are usually enshrined idols, with censers and incense before them. From here we can look down to the lake beneath, through the brown, rough-barked trunks of fir, or through the green-shaded cathedral of smooth, polished stems of bamboo, which hold over us their tall graceful feather-like heads. Then there are places where the slope of the bank is clothed with hundreds and hundreds of amaryllis lilies, in a setting of bracken-fern.

Kien-Ning scenery is always beautiful, whether it be in the richness of summer or the glory of autumn fullness; clothed in the darker greens and browns of winter, or in spring, when a great inrush of life banishes all that is dead and seared, and dresses the valleys in green and the mountains in the pink and white of tree rhododendron, brilliant azalea, jessamine and rose.

There is a parable in rice growing. Seed-grain is not sown broadcast, but in little enclosed spaces of soft watered ground; soon the little spaces are patches

of brightest green and hold the harvest of the year. Outside each patch there stretch on and on great tracts of land, getting ready to take what the seed-plot has to give, in order that its purpose and its promise shall be fulfilled. At the appointed time, in the rainy season, streamlets of water from upper springs are sent from level to level, by little channels, through boundary ridges, in even, gentle flow, until every part is watered, and waits to be planted with hundreds and thousands of seedling clusters, spaced apart in furrowed rows, over a vast expanse of ground —truly a vast transplanting from so very small a seed-plot, the supplying of a manifold increase at the coming great harvest.

What unthinkable loss had the seedling plants from the seed-plot not been scattered abroad! What pitiful waste, should a golden harvest wait in vain for reapers to reap it, and perish in the waiting! Does this need application? "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest." "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

Ciong-Bau has been one of our village centres for more than thirty years; a few of its people were already Christians, when, in 1890, Miss I. Newcombe and Miss Johnson arrived to open work amongst the women of this prefecture. Amongst "the labourers" from this Church, we praise God for one who is now at rest, the wife of a man who welcomed the "Sisters" to Ciong-Bau and helped them so well in their early days that for long he was known as "The Manager." Opposed to her husband's Christianity, she was treated with patience, and made to wonder what had happened. She tried him in various ways—left him dinnerless on Sundays, for instance—

but he took it calmly, and said very little, instead of being wrathful with her, and when she was won, there burned in her heart such a love for the Saviour that, to the end of her life, she was an earnest soul-winner, preaching the Gospel Message near and far. When she was taken Home another worker was prepared, who now for years has worked in that district, steadfast and strong in her Christian life, and very able and earnest. She is one of those who stand out clearly from a dark and distressing background, not seeking removal to other fields, but sowing and reaping faithfully where she is known from childhood's days. She came to Ciong-Bau as a little girl, in exchange for a baby boy, a not uncommon heathen custom arranged between two mothers for the boy's safe keeping from malign spirits, who would naturally seek for him in his own home, and not trouble to look elsewhere. In course of time the boy came back, but the girl remained as his future wife, and this became a heathen home-life tragedy. But Christianity came to this home, and the girl had relief from the turbulent boy, for they sent her to school, first in Ku Tien, then in Foo Chow; these were nine years of blessed preparation for her coming years of service. The lad grew up the pride and grief of his parents, sometimes so good, sometimes so bad, kind-hearted, unruly and lazy. He often followed his mother to the Saturday night prayer-meeting, and heard with apparent complacence her candid recital of all his sins, confessed in prayer before him, and sauntered away at the close with a satisfied smile and farewell request, "Please, all of you for me pray."

His parents are gone long since, and he, as a man, is still as the boy, turbulent and refractory.

And Mi-Ngi, while bearing her burden of shame

as the wife of a gambling idler, is blessedly used in her preaching and teaching, a tried and trusted worker.

At Ciong-Bau, in 1899, Miss Bryer opened a Boarding School for the children of Christian parents, here the seed-plot parable comes in again, for this school has nurtured many a seedling, transplanted to other fields, seed-bearing in beautiful endlessness, for "While the earth remaineth seed-time and harvest . . . shall not cease." "That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

One of the earliest pupils, Chaing-Niong, sister to Mi-Ngi's husband, has now worked for years with Miss Coleston and Miss Boaz, first at Nang-Ua and since at Sung-Ki, and is an earnest, much blessed Bible-woman, well skilled in a simple, winning presentment of deep and glorious truths. Many a woman now reading the Bible with intelligent interest in romanized lettering, owes her acquired blessing to Chaing-Niong's patience in teaching word signs, so unlike the revered Chinese characters; revered but alas! read by so many without understanding, and quite out of reach of women who are elderly and uneducated: while those of average brain-power can profitably read their romanized Testaments after from three to six months' study. Are the women in other lands, young, middle-aged and old, when anxious to learn from the Holy Book, allowed to leave their homes for months, and bringing a necessary child or two? Will they sit as diligent children in school, trying hard to take in the teaching, learning from dawn to dark? It is pathetic to hear the old ladies regretting the sight of their youth, "For now the sorrows of years have wept out the light of our eyes." Occasionally spectacles meet the need, and there are great rejoicings and each borrows of her

neighbour, for should not foreign glasses make every one able to see ?

Two more ex-pupils—Meng-Aing and So-Seng—are also witnessing at Sung-ki; So-Geng, with her husband, Li-Cie, his name well worn by the " Manager's " wife, who was known far and near as "Li-Cie's mother." Then there are girls from our school, as wives of Church workers and other men, planted in cities and villages over the prefecture, each " bearing fruit after his kind." [1]

Hu-Geng, in her earliest Christian days, was sent by Miss Rodd, to the women's hospital, in charge of her delicate youngest son ; and there she learned to love God so well that she loved, for His sake, not only the sick, but all whom she touched in her daily life. And her comforting, motherly influence was of such worth among heathen patients that Miss Johnson kept her and taught her nursing, gaining thereby a companion worker and also a very dear friend. She has left three sons as her legacy to the Church : the eldest of them is a day-school teacher, and the younger ones are still in college, ambitious in study, and both of them hoping to enter the medical profession.

Bo̤-Seng was found and led into Light by Miss Rodd. Truly a grand old lady, original, keen and an earnest

[1] Regular Sunday services now held in thirty places throughout our Kien-Ning Prefecture. Outlying villages from Ciong-Bau have also sent forth their workers, and of these gifts to the Church we gratefully think of Hu-Geng, Hu-Eng and Bo̤-Seng, who are now in their heavenly Home ; of old Mrs. Suing-Te, an exhorter in Chung-An, and of Liong-Aing and Siu-Liong, one in her first year of Bible-woman's work and the other a teacher in the Girls' Boarding School, a gentle woman, whose quiet strength makes her influence exceedingly good.

soul-seeker. Deaf and deafer as years increased, and sorely afflicted with rheumatism, she was most saintly in patience and utterly grateful for any little attention, loving her "Sisters," Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer, in overflow measure.

Hu-Eng was a Bible-woman at Nang-Wa and her widow daughter, O-Mue, was also a Bible-woman here in this city, until she fell into unthinkable temptation, and for her we wait in longing and faith for conviction, repentance and restoration. Seng-Ngi, her adopted daughter, has been nurse in our women's hospital ever since she left school at Ciong-Bau, in 1907, with one little interlude for her marriage. Engaged to the man from earliest days, she sees nothing in him to like; mutually indifferent one to the other, he is selfishly pleased that her pleasure is to be independent of him: even their four-year-old Philip has not managed to draw them much closer together. But indeed he is quite unworthy of her, and she has to suffer from China's miserable child-marriage custom, like thousands of other wives. However, the hospital, in her case, is very much the gainer. Few could allay a patient's fear as pleasantly as Seng-Ngi, and who so genial, patient, tactful and wise in all her ways with the people? Often, when visiting in heathen homes, we hear it said, in pleased recognition, by those who at some time have been to hospital, "Seng-Ngi and Song Sister,[1] of course we know. Why, Seng-Ngi and Song Sister every one knows. Truly they greatly love us, and very much know how to pity."

Seng-Ngi, as a little child, was a charming bit of wild life. Sitting on a stool, her feet dangling down

[1] Miss Johnson.

its sides, she used to listen to patients being taught in the hospital at "Seven Stars Bridge." Dark locks of hair, too short for neat binding, hung over her sun-browned face. It suddenly beamed with interested thought, and she exclaimed, as if hugely satisfied, "Now I know, now I am glad; all my life long I have heard of the Trinity, but not until now, did I know all it meant."

Though not connected with the Ciong-Bau Church, Cie-Aing was so one with the older workers that she must be mentioned with them. Dear, faithful, earnest, unlettered Bible-woman! The words, "For she loved much," cover the sixteen years of her Christian life. Not wise or tactful, her blunders were many, and she constantly gave unconscious offence, but she was as often sinned against, and always far more forgiving. She was great in faith, because of her child-like trust in God, and ever an inspiration to us in an earnest desire to give glory to God, on every occasion. When her son, a preacher, was taken Home, she went out visiting in the days of natural mourning, "with a glad face," that heathen acquaintances might see for themselves what a hope in sorrow God's people have and how wonderfully comforted and honoured she was, as the mother of a son "With Christ." She, too, was found by Miss Rodd, and saved from a very dark place; but from earliest days she knew of unsatisfied need. "I used to cry when the peach tree flowered, the flowers so soon went away; but now a tree of pink buds in spring fills me with such glad joy. It was dead, it awakes again, as after this little time we too shall awake to unending Life."

CHAPTER XI.

SOME LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE.

"Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away."—*Isa.* xlix. 25.

"And I will give thee the treasures of darkness."—*Isa.* xlv. 3.

OUR Blind and Leper Villages, one within and one without the city walls, are really fine examples of heathen philanthropic enterprise. Their origin gives us a shaft of light through the darkness of past history. In A.D. 944 the king of the Province, who reigned from Foo-Chow, gave his brother, Uang Ing-ceng, the governance of Kien-Ning, but soon when occasion came he shook off allegiance to his royal brother and proclaimed himself king of Kien-Ning prefecture. He resided in this city, and now on "Capital Royal Ground" there are beautiful trees and fine wide roads, but all else that remains to tell of past glory is held in the name of the neighbourhood.

King Ing-ceng possessed a compassionate heart, for when his mother was smitten with blindness he was most deeply distressed, and in his distress his heart reached out to the many amongst his subjects who also were blind, or else were crippled, diseased and helpless, and, because of disablement, poor. And his pity moved him to action, for he planned the building of hamlets, where all those unfitted to run life's race should not only be given a home, but also a dole of copper cash and the enjoyment of other benefits.

THE BLIND VILLAGE.

To-day, in each of these hamlets, there is a eulogistic tablet to King Ing-Ceng, whose merciful kindness has blessed the afflicted for over one thousand years. These tablets are greatly revered, not only by the grateful poor, but also by men in high places. When a mandarin visits the Kien-Ning Blind Village, he must leave his sedan-chair outside the big doorway and stand on the threshold bowing in worship to the illustrious memory of a "Love-heart" king, then slowly walk in, with his head bowed low, looking neither to east nor west.

The blind of to-day, when treated with rudeness, like to retort in unanswerable pride, "We are a king's pity-crown, and only despised by the ignorant." This doubtless explains why the Kien-Ning blind are a fairly respected class, and not, like the blind in many places, counted as beggar outcasts.

The tone of the place was raised still higher, half a century ago, by good Mandarin Iong, who, as well as giving $2,000 for enlarging the houses and adding on property, also paid tribute to the talent of reciting legends by naming the village in dignified words, "Retaining Book-knowledge Place." The present system may not entirely agree with the original intention, yet the Blind and Leper Villages are most valuable charities, and would be greatly missed should they cease to exist. An entrance fee of ten dollars, and a twelve dollar entrance feast, is required of all applicants for admission. This entitles them to a house for life, a daily dole of twelve cash,[1] distributed either monthly or quarterly from the yamen, and regulated dues, at certain seasons, from tea, wood- and salt merchants; also, on the last day of the year,

[1] 1,000 cash in a dollar.

a present of one pound of fresh pork from the yamen to the head of each family. Should an applicant be unable to pay his fee, and only spread the feast, he may lodge in the place, receive dues, but no dole. And should he not be able even to provide the feast, he can enter as an apprentice to an inmate, for whom he will earn in begging expeditions, and by whom he will be supported for two or more years.

In the Blind Village, begging, with or without chanting of songs and folk-lore, is counted as a legitimate profession. Once a year, on the first day of the fifth month, the inmates (men, women and children) sweep through the city in a body; as they approach, householders stand in readiness at their doors, holding bowls filled with uncooked rice, from which every one of the blind receives a small spoonful. It is an annual event and brooks neither delay nor refusal. Fortunately for the afflicted in China, their fellow-countrymen can accumulate merit, by giving to their necessity.

Legend chanting is a superior and profitable profession amongst the blind, and is greatly in demand in this city as entertainment at festivals, weddings and birthdays of men and idols. It is an astonishing display of memory power. A woman, at her best, in good training, can recite some hundred books, no book taking less than an hour to repeat, most of them three and four hours, and some even from six to nine. For this reason Christianity has not found so ready an acceptance in the Blind as in the Leper Village. The blind become Christians at greater cost, for they must relinquish the most money-making part of their profession, namely, fortune-telling and legend chanting, where it is idolatrous and superstitious or interferes with Sunday-keeping. This is a stumbling-block

to many. Hiong-Seng's aunt, Su-Gi, has come to and gone from the very door of God's Kingdom at intervals through the past twelve years—drawn on by a longing for salvation, a longing given by the Holy Spirit, in answer to her home intercessor's continued prayer—and drawn back while hesitating over the cost. When Hiong-Seng and Hiong-Seng's mother were baptized, Aunt Su-Gi was terribly sad. "I knew of this first," she exclaimed, "but still I am standing outside, and they are within." More than once, and in tears, she has besought us to present her for baptism. "Were I a Church person, could I not more easily overcome the Devil's temptations?" Five years ago she overcame for a while, and was admitted to the Catechumenate, but alas! it led her no farther. Occasionally she comes to Church, and sometimes she goes to Guang-Seng's evening worship, which is open to all in the village; but more often she yields to the call of the world and stifles the longing within her. Oh, that she and others, resisting the Spirit's pleading, could awake to sudden perception of awful necessity for salvation, and of the unmeasurable love, the unrestrained sacrifice which secured it; and hear in their hearts the Saviour say:

"Sorrow, sin and desolation—this thy claim to Me.
Love that won thee full salvation—this My claim to thee.
Soul, I know, I stand beseeching! Turn me not away.
Heart that craves thee, Love that needs thee—wilt thou say Me nay?"

Work is difficult in the Blind Village; suspicion and gross superstition hang as a low-lying cloud over the minds of the people and darken their understanding. Guang-Seng is always refreshed by working at times elsewhere, and returns with strength renewed

for life amongst those who either oppose or treat with indifference each effort she makes to win them. Morning and evening her prayer-bell used to ring, and her little hall filled for worship; some have since grown cold, and others have gone Home.

Among the latter was our dear Gu-Meng, who came to stay with us for a while when wanting to be a Christian. Loving, trustful, responsive child! She learned with ease and joy, surprisingly quick in apprehension of deeper, spiritual truth. Prayer came naturally to her. One morning her husband, suddenly fearful, sent to call her away; she straightway knelt down, and before us all cried out in her moment's need, "Lord Jesus, is this not the Devil's work to keep me from learning of Thee! I am in a narrow place; hold me tightly, tightly, then he cannot pull me back." One little scene in those early days was often recalled through the dark years that followed. Gu-Meng, unconscious of a missionary onlooker, sat on a high stool in a crowded idol-temple, preaching, persuading and teaching with an earnestness which commanded quiet from a usually restless audience. Was she over-confident of her own persuasiveness or too independent of control. Had she not learnt to pray the prayer so often heard in later days, "Hold my hand tightly, tightly, hold me, or I fall"?

We sent her away from the city for the hottest months to the village where her father lived, not knowing that he was an opium eater and a very wicked man. He enticed her; she must earn money for him; so she gradually fell to lowest depths of sin and wretchedness. Her husband tried to rescue her, but for two whole years she would not be saved or helped.

One evening, at sunset, a man paused to whisper

as he passed me, "One in the Blind Village is sick unto death; she greatly longs to see you." The pathos of that visit was very moving. "You have come to me! now I believe that God still loves me. You forgive me, He also forgives me." What a confession of sins was poured out; tears ran down the thin, sightless face as she rocked a newly-born and dying babe in her arms. When the little life was gone she came to us again—a gentle, humble, grateful woman. Then—sometimes here, sometimes at home, her husband opposing and persecuting her, her neighbours recalling past sin to remembrance—her life, though anything but easy, was, in the main, victorious.

Not two months later she tremblingly brought us this request, "May I, dare I, join in the heathen visiting? I want to tell everywhere that God can save the worst of sinners."

So soon? Was her restoration sufficiently established? Away with hesitation. Remember the Master's own words, "And do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren."

It was while visiting with her, at this time, that she gave her beautiful answer to a question, asked in scornful sarcasm: "Your God being all you say, why are your eyes still blind?" "His light is bright in my heart. When this life is over, my eyes will be no longer blind. Now it is as if the roof of my house was slightly damaged; I sit inside all at peace."

The months of preparation for baptism were full of blessing and quiet joy. Her new name, by the addition of one letter, became, from Gu-Eng, Gu-Meng, "Dwelling in Light." Many a time afterwards the meaning of that name helped her to calmness and peace; but her difficulties were, as often as not, caused by her own temperament—sensitive, hot-

tempered, quickly offended, yet always ready to be entreated. Fear of her weakness, with a sense of unworthiness, made her hold back from Confirmation; and it was not until after the birth of a "prayer-answer son" that the depths of her being were moved in gratitude and devotion to God for the greatness of His love. "I am sinning in holding back," she said. "I am disobeying my Lord's command and wish, 'With desire I have desired to eat . . . with you. . . . This do in remembrance of Me.'"

One month later, on the last night of the old year, her husband and brother-in-law practised such terribly devilish idolatry in their little house that Gu-Meng and a Christian woman next door were terrified at the sounds they heard, and called to each other through the thin walls, "Our Lord is more powerful, the house is all devil, we must sing God." At once they sang hymn after hymn, loudly repeated parts of the Bible and prayed for deliverance. "Songs in the night," songs of light in a darkness that could be felt.

In the morning, what consternation! A stain on the floor and half-cooked grains of rice. People came in to see, then hastily went away. Yes, the spirits had taken revenge for insult received by leaving their deadliest poison behind for the insulter to breathe and be harmed.

Gu-Meng fell ill and they mercifully brought her to hospital. Quite soon her four months' old babe, her precious "prayer-answer boy," was smitten and died. In the midst of that deep, deep sorrow, her one desire and prayer was that grief might bring her husband to saving repentance, but he was frantic with anger, ascribing the death of his only child to the devils invoked that night. In wrathful despair,

he broke up and threw out from the house every idol in his possession. Gu-Meng herself was strangely ill, alternately better and worse. "For this one thing pray," she asked, "that I may be well by Easter Sunday and walk to Church for the Holy Communion." A wonderfully answered prayer. On Tuesday in Holy Week she unexpectedly and suddenly passed away. At first we could hardly believe it. In her twenty-third year, she seemed so full of promise, love, life and impulsive energy, so ready for use, so quick to His touch; now she was gone. But this life to Gu-Meng would have always been hard, and we praised God for the Love which spared her more striving and took her to rest in safe keeping. She was missed very much; the services seemed to need her keen, intelligent interest; no face so brightened and saddened like hers in play of expression while listening to teaching, as she lost no shade of inner meaning.

Her husband, doubly stricken, implored us to pray, "that as she had eaten such sorrow on earth, the Saviour she served would give her quick entrance to heaven's hall, and allow her to see His Face."

Only this year he died; because of a greatly feared illness he was alone for some days before, and alone to the very end. It may be that then in his terrible need he turned in true penitent faith to the all-merciful God, and found in Him pardon, acceptance and peace. This hope recalls a quaint remark of the dear simple Bible-woman, Cie-Aing, when she first heard of Absalom's death, "It was all of God's mercy, all of God's love, letting him hang alive in the tree, for did it not give him time to repent, and was not his father praying for him?"

CHAPTER XII

GUANG-SENG

"In the blackness of night and the darkness."—*Prov.* vii. 9.

"Suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me."—*Acts* xxii. 6.

ONE hot summer evening, before the little ones' bedtime, the drill-hall was filled with the noise of their play, when Guang-Seng, here for a few weeks' rest, turned her dear sightless face towards me, and said in an almost passionate earnestness:

"Was I not born too soon, too soon. Child-gladness like this I never knew. When I was born, Kien-Ning lay in darkness, not one glimmer of light had come to its seven counties. Diau Sister, were you but giving these children one bowl of plain rice a day, they would still be happy, most happy. You love them, protect them; they are clothed, fed and taught. What do they know of sorrow? They are blessed with the blessing of God.

"You would like me to tell you my story! It is sad, it is dark, no brightness in it at all, none from the moment of birth. I was the seventh daughter and yet was allowed to live, while most of the six before me had been thrown away as no use. When I was seven years old, the light went out of my eyes, a sadness added to sadness. My father and mother, not having the knowledge of God, had in their hearts for me no thought of pity or love. They had wasted the

trouble of bringing me up. Why had they let me live? What had they done to earn a blind girl as their own? In less than three years they tired of having me with them, and brought me themselves to this City's Blind Village, where they gave me away to an old blind man and his sighted wife. Oh, it was lonely and strange those days, and yet no one was unkind or unduly harsh as my mother had been. With the help of bamboo rods, one in each hand, tapping and finding the ground for my steps, I quickly learnt to walk to places both near and far, through the streets and lanes of the city, and out to the country beyond. I shared in the begging trips, and some of these lasted for days; between sunrise and dark we walked upwards of twenty miles. We slept in temples and bridges, were scorched in heat, frozen in cold, and soaked in wet and rain. Once, in a village six miles away, I met with such a happy thing. A woman took pity upon me—an unkempt, blind child. She called me into her house—took off and washed my clothes, washed me from head to foot, put me in her own bed, gave me much rice to eat, and allowed me to stay for the night, the most wonderful time in those years. Alas, alas! she died before the 'Good News' had come to Kien-Ning. How good had I brought that to her in return for her kindness to me.

"When I was fourteen years old, the people I served by begging for them married me to John's father. He was ten years older than I and very much liked to do nothing. I had to feed his mouth by going out every day, but begging is an uncertain trade and his moods were just as uncertain. When I brought him home much, he treated me well; when I brought him home little, he scolded to death. The following year I learnt to chant songs and legends—learnt with

great earnestness, learnt with success, could chant at least forty books. Then I earned well and John's father was pleased. There was good demand in the city that time for the blind to entertain guests in this way.

"From the time I was seventeen, and until I was thirty-seven, my life knew nothing of peace. Chanting and begging, by night and by day; chanting and begging in order to live; outside, doing man; inside, doing woman, for John's father could only sit still in the house and hold the babies at times. Seventeen children I had, and of all only brought up seven. The first six were girls, three of whom died at birth, and one I immediately gave away, while two are still living. The next seven were boys, two of whom live; the rest died when quite little, except one that I sold, in a time of stress, for not more than twenty dollars. Then followed twin boys, who died, and in their stead I adopted Eng-Ngu from the Foundling Home as a future daughter-in-law. The sixteenth, a girl, I at once gave away; and the last, my John, was born when Light had shone on my darkness, when my sorrows were over, for then I knew God.

"Never once at their birth did I allow the expense of a woman's help; I always managed alone. No extra food was given me; John's father let me get strong as I could. But once I was ill for forty days, a terrible illness indeed, and then he had to be frightened. Since that time my strength has been less. Yes, my life was hard, so hard, until I was thirty-seven, and then there happened my wonderful change, and it took all the hardness away. One day you sisters appeared in the village and preached of God's saving grace. The words scarcely entered into my heart as having to do with me, and yet they were

good to hear. You visited several times. I listened to what you taught, listened most carefully, swallowed a little, and slowly, slowly thought, but it seemed too great, too deep, too high, to be fitted for such as I. Who did not know my temper, fiery, fierce and strong? And yet I was wanting, as one hungry for rice; wanting, as one thirsty for tea.

"Then, like a storm, the Church persecution broke out (in 1899) and you all had to go away. But Mr. Li and Mr. Su, our own Chinese brothers, still visited and taught us of God. They preached without fear, preached at the risk of their lives, for our rulers had strictly forbidden the 'Jesus Doctrine' in Kien-Ning.

"John's father, wholly believing, asked them to destroy our house idols. I, only half believing, was angrily fearful, and hid away two of my own that had helped with the coming of children. Then I compared the kind hearts of these men with the unkind ways of my no-God own brothers, and knew that great saving had come to them, that the Saviour they preached was mighty, and when they decided to meet in our house, now clean from the Devil's things on 'Worship Day' to do big worship, I was exceedingly glad. When, after a year, Song Sister and Ngu Sister [1] returned to Kien-Ning, they pressingly asked me to stay at Seven Stars Bridge. With some trepidation, I went with two children, and paid them a ten days' visit. Great kindness towards me was shown by all, but quite the most wonderful to me was the way the Sisters prayed to God, not for themselves, but for me and for others. I came home, most firmly believing. Later again, I fell ill, and Song Sister received me in hospital, and healed me with foreign medicine. Yes

[1] Miss Johnson, Miss Gardner.

from now, my troubles were over, for what does a saved one know of world-sorrow? The Lord Jesus is in her heart, her burdens are carried by Him.

"Then, when this school was opened, you invited me in to read, and then from only believing I came to an understanding of God's Will and God's Word. Oh, there is nothing, nothing, that I can do in return for the depth of God's love-heart to me. He planned my blindness in order to bring me to the Blind Village, a place where His messengers went. He planned those years of hard suffering that I might welcome release. No one so little deserving, no one so greatly blessed.

"'Have I no troubles now?' you ask. Oh, yes, I still have the trials that keep me depending on God, though sometimes I sin in not having patience, and forgetting that by them He prepares me for heaven. My most lasting trial is the old man, John's father, for his mouth speaks no pleasant words; grumbling and scolding, scolding and grumbling, he sits in the house all day; and yet he was wiser than I, for did he not first believe? And indeed he is blessed of God, for no sooner had John outgrown his arms than grandsons came to be in them."

Thus she ended her story, and one looked from her fine, purposeful face to the children still playing around, and prayed in longing that they, growing up in their setting of joy, knowing nothing of hardship and care, might not be less earnest and vigorous, less strong in their Christian lives than Guang-Seng in her setting of stress and strain. She has had some deep spiritual experiences, spoken of at the time they happened.

One night she was sleepless and troubled; her spirit was sorely oppressed. Her God was so great, so utterly mighty, and she, one of His servants, so longing,

longing to serve ; but why was she lacking in power ? How was it possible to preach and to preach and not touch a solitary heart ? Her own eldest son was a heathen, and household affairs, including her husband, always exceedingly carking. Why were her neighbours still unbelievers, when the Message she gave was a Message of Life ? In restless mood, she arose and went to the outer hall, but it felt too small, too confined, so she gently unfastened the door and went out into the brightness of China's moonlight. At that time her eyes could distinguish the difference between darkness and light. Not a sound came from the houses around, not a sound from anywhere. Was it the mysterious hour towards dawn, when a breathless silence pervades the air, and the sleep of all is deep ? She stood alone under the heavens, alone in a vast, still world. She stretched out her arms in the space, and spoke aloud the cry of her heart, " Oh, God, my God, let me come near Thee now, let me know that I have Thy Spirit. . . . Oh, God, my God, my spirit, my soul, my body, all, all are Thine. . . ." And God spoke to her heart in the stillness. He breathed in His calm, through the pulses of her desire ; He made His Goodness pass before her ; His gentleness made her great. Then her being was moved in gladness, in wonder and holy awe. Accepted and owned and blessed, in abandonment of surrender, she knew she was His for ever.

Perhaps the burden of unsaved souls was heaviest on her heart after a vision given her on a Good Friday Eve. She came to us in the morning and could not speak for weeping. Had she not seen her Lord, her suffering Lord, His Arms outstretched upon the Cross, in a yearning love for those He was dying to save ?

"But more than pains that racked Him then
Was the deep longing thirst Divine,
That thirsted for the souls of men:
Dear Lord! and one was mine."

That vision she often recalls in a quickening fervour of love.

There is a finely characteristic memory picture of later days, which is well worth trying to show in words:—

In 1912, the first year of China's republic, New China's young men in this city were seized with a spirit of iconoclasm, and ruthlessly raided temples and shrines, breaking and throwing the idols about; not because they believed in the living God, but from an awakening to sudden scorn of the dead things their fathers worshipped.

Guang-Seng one day spent hours in the neighbourhood of her home seeking an entrance to houses where she might give her Message, seeking with little success. Returning towards evening, she found herself on the edge of an angry, excited crowd, who being questioned gave her in explanation, "Our shrine is pulled down, the image is broken. What will now save us from harm? The idol, offended and despised, how can we escape from his wrath?" Guang-Seng was stirred in spirit, and moved with pity for men so bound by the chain of fear. She asked to be led to the shrine; then, finding a foothold on the débris, stood up higher than those around her. "I invite you to listen," she cried. "This idol destroyed is of a false spirit, but I worship the living God, the God Who made heaven and earth: beside Him there is no true God, beside Him there is none that can save." In a silence compelled by God-power within her, she preached the Saviour, Lord Jesus, told of the "Judg-

ment to come," and besought them to seek salvation. For the moment she was more than a blind woman standing before those men; no one of them ventured to argue, not one of them dared to taunt. As she finished, they quietly went away, and she stood still where she was, and prayed that they might believe. In prayer, she is ever an inspiration. Once when pouring her heart out in praise, she said in perfect sincerity, "My God, my Father, I thank Thee for healing my most-good-to-love little grandson. I thank Thee more for his weary long illness, with all its anguish of suspense and watching; for was it not as Thy Hand adding more oil to my too faintly burning lamp? From now may it shine more brightly, both in my own Christian home and in the heathen homes of those around me."

Sometimes we wonder how far Guang-Seng is limited in God's service by her blindness. Were she a sighted woman, would her gifts of acute perception, broadness of sympathy, freshness and vigour in thought and speech, make her more of a power than she is now in the Church? But was she not blind when God called her to bear His Name in Kien-Ning's dark places; and does she not daily prove that His grace is sufficient for her?

When God once commissioned a "not eloquent" man to do a mighty work, He knew the man was slow of speech, and He knew his brother spoke well; but one was equipment as much as the other, for either sufficed a God Who perfects His strength in the weakness of wholly surrendered men. "And the Lord said unto Him . . . Who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now, therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. iv. 11, 12).

CHAPTER XIII.

LEPERS AND THEIR JOY.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."—1 *Cor.* xv. 19.

THE walk from here to the Leper Village can never be a weariness. It leads away from the closed-in streets to a high part of the city, and passes the grounds of the military yamen, where beyond and over the roofs of houses the mountain view is grand. Just at one place-where a valley opens, the pagoda, which "holds good luck for the city," stands clearly against the skyline. Soon, one can leave the cobble-stone street and go up on the city wall, which, just there, is a wide grassy walk, bounded by battlements which on their outer side are some twenty-five feet from the ground below. A flight of wide steps leads down to the tunnel-like arch of the gateway, a fine piece of old-China masonry. The gate itself, which turns in big stone sockets, is eighteen feet high, six inches thick, and each side is more than seven feet wide. It is made of squared pillars of wood, bound together with great wooden bars, and the whole of the outer side is covered with iron sheets and thoroughly clamped with iron bands. Samson's strength was mighty indeed, if Gaza's gate was half as heavy. And outside this there is a moat-like place, enclosed by a lower wall, in which there is a smaller gate and five round holes for five cannon.

THE GATE TO THE LEPER VILLAGE

These cannon, rusty and unwieldy, lie in numbers at most of the gates, though, perhaps, a useless existence has saved their reputation, which might have been shattered had they been tested. Once outside the city the leper hamlet is in sight. It is reached by a narrow path which leaves the broad highway, and which is bordered profusely in spring with wild white climbing roses, wild spiræa and honey-suckle, the "gold-silver flower," counted as good to eat. On a summer evening it is a garden of delight, for it runs beside field-ponds full of hundreds and thousands of lotus in dreamiest loveliness, in bud and open flower. Their large, flat leaves make them a handsome set-off, and all but hide the water beneath, while the flowers rise high and tall, their full pink petals, measuring, when wide open, four to six inches across. On the other side of the path are the low, loosely-built, brown earth walls of the Leper Village; and could the two sides of any wall face scenes more unlike?

Over the actual village we have no control. It is not an attractive place; the houses are small low-roofed hovels, provided with liberal ventilation by chronic need of repair. Still, they are homes to some thirty families, who are not dissatisfied with them. These are separated by a few yards from our unpretentious premises—an evangelist's house, by the "Worship Hall," adjoining three little houses, and close by, though detached from these, the much-valued dispensary hospital.

A first visit to this place brings intense relief, for the distressing sights one shrank from seeing are not immediately noticed. We need not arrive by the hamlet entrance, but at a small side-door, which opens on to our own premises. And there we are greeted by lepers, standing at the verandah rail,

neither moaning nor groaning, but broadly smiling, and all in a body "Peace-greeting" the "Sisters," who may not return a collective greeting, but must give it to each one by name. Lepers they are indeed, but all signs of the fell disease are, as far as possible, hidden from sight. Here there is no ceremonial defilement. Lepers in China need not stand "afar off," for although it is counted an unclean ill, they say it is not really contagious until the hour of death.

Only disabled, unattached men live in the little hospital, so a gong is beaten to announce our arrival to those whose homes are outside. They come in with slow and laboured steps, lepers and non-lepers, each one in his measure of maimedness. There are two who will move you to painful compassion; both are fathers of families, who live with their wives and children without a thought on either side of risk in so doing. These are Mong-Cuoi, a fine big man, and the delicate little Keng-Aing.

Mong-Cuoi, not yet baptized, because he is bound by the opium chain, does not seek complete release. Poor man! it is sin under terrible provocation, for opium is eaten to deaden suffering. But he declares he worships God, and is a Christian at heart. He is always very responsive to words of comfort and exhortation, and is touchingly grateful for any attempt to help him. It is impossible not to think of King Asa when Keng-Aing, with painful effort, walks in, "diseased in his feet, until his disease was very great." And yet he has lately refused to allow a nine-year-old son to go to a Home for untainted children, to be cared for, now and later, because "his mother and I could not see his face, how would we know he had peace! He himself is not willing,

LEPER VILLAGE.

best let him be; here in his home, he is well."

"*Well!*" while eating, living and sleeping with his poor leprous father. The Chinese are woefully ignorant of the rudiments of hygiene. In both these thoroughly leprous homes a Foundling Home child will always be found, for whose care in a leper's hovel the authorities pay a monthly wage. The one plea for such a crime is crass ignorance.

In turn the lepers all come to the dispensary window, where each one prescribes for himself, and is given a weekly supply of the drugs, which happily alleviate the ill that cannot be healed. We need not keep a big medicine shop, for one or two ointments, powders and lotion, old linen, bandages and cotton wool are sufficient for the demand. Mong-Cuoi may prompt to generous giving by announcing a patent fact, "Small pieces of linen no use for me; my sores are many and large." With fingerless hands, he gives in his vessels, empty, ready for filling, then, deftly between his two palms, takes them back one by one.

Lor-Aing, Guoi-Aing and now Dau-Da, in giving us a saint succession, have made the work in the Leper Village seem utterly worth while. The following story of Lor-Aing is taken from a letter, written in 1912, the year of her translation, but perhaps it may bear re-telling.

One day, about five years before, she arrived at our hospital dressed as a bride, her face, pink and white with powder and paint, and her hair adorned with flowers and jewellery.

As Miss Johnson received her, the bridegroom came forward and asked that she might be admitted and healed of a slight complaint. Ah! well he knew and well her parents had known the nature of the complaint; for was he not a leper himself and they had

arranged the marriage ? But no one had told the child, and she suspected nothing. A sorrowful telling, a sorrowful hearing, and then they went to the Leper Village to one of our little homes beside the "Worship hall." Next day she awoke in that place as a leper's leper wife, facing a life of increasing distress, in the midst of disease and deformity. Her incessant crying was pitiful. She wanted her home and her parents; she was hopeless, lonely and desolate. No words of comfort brought any relief. "Cry, let me cry; sad, I am sad unto death." Then through the gloom and depression, into which her crying subsided, One Voice, One call reached her saddened heart, "Come unto Me, ye weary, and I will give you rest." She came and found rest. "Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon My breast."

She greatly enjoyed our weekly class. Bible stories, hymns and verses were loved and easily learned. She was always waiting in her place, the poor face powdered heavily, in pitiful attempt to hide what was increasingly not to be hidden. On nights, when pain drove sleep away, she would softly sing her favourite hymn over and over again. "Safe in the arms of Jesus." "I feel His arms around me, and in them I fall asleep." Worse and worse she grew; her throat was attacked; her eyes distressed her; she became almost blind. Then for fifteen months she endured such terrible physical suffering that one could only look on in wonder at her patience, and rejoice increasingly at the might of a Father's love which could so prepare a loved child for her coming endless bliss. There was a week of fearful agony, in which the light of both eyes went out, leaving her totally blind. She said, "I can only bear my unbearable body because the Lord Jesus is with me night and

1. LEPER VILLAGE FROM CITY WALL.
2. KIEN-NING CHURCH.
3. DA-NING, "CHURCH MOTHER"

day." Are we to spare ourselves in the speaking of what she, our sister, lived through? No, let us go in and stand beside her. The room is oppressively hot, but she is only conscious of cold. Flies and mosquitoes swarm round her, and she has no strength to fan them off. Look on her face; not one feature is untouched; there are no eyelids to cover inflamed eye-balls; nose, lips, teeth, gums, tongue and throat all are badly affected; patches of medicinal herb are on head, forehead and cheeks; but there are open sores on neck and shoulders, hands and wrists. Poor Lor-Aing, you were once proud of the pretty hands with their tapering fingers and long-pointed nails, always so carefully kept! And your little bound feet are now one mass of corrupted flesh!

Listen! she is speaking in breathless whispers, "Are you asking my Lord to come quickly for me? My body is almost not to be borne. With the breaking of day I say, 'Lord Jesus, I wait and wait; art Thou coming for me to-day? I long to set out with exceeding longing.'"

"Yes, Lor-Aing, He is coming soon."

"Then He is nearly here, good, so good! And I will be waiting at Heaven's gate to welcome you when you come."

Only a few nights after this she had a vision given her of "One Whose Face was most good to see, standing beside her, in very white raiment, and saying, 'Lor-Aing, Lor-Aing! your waiting is over, I am coming for you to-day.'"

So when morning dawned she asked her husband to dress her in her very best clothes, for "I am starting out to-day, and must be ready in time."

She sat at her door in expectancy; then, in tremulous whispering, said, "The Christians may all come in

now ; they will escort me to heaven." They gathered around her to sing and to pray, as is their wont at such times, and while they were singing she left them.

Ineffable moment ! " All rapture through and through in God's most holy sight." " For we know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us hereafter." " Sown in dishonour . . . raised in glory." What a recognition awaits with her promised welcome ! A glorified Lor-Aing, radiant in the beauty of the Lord.

There is a leaflet called " Guoi-Aing, a Leper Saint," published by The Mission to Lepers in India and the East, the mission to which our lepers owe all that is being done to help them ; but as it was written before he died, a few of his later sayings may be recorded. Like Lor-Aing, as his " outward man " perished his " inward man " was renewed. They both present an example of the triumph of grace under adverse conditions. Although as ill as she, because his face was scarcely affected, his sufferings seemed less distressing, but two great deprivations came to him in his last year—first, the loss of his eyesight, then the loss of all sense of feeling in his poor maimed hands. When the burden of physical suffering oppressed his spirit, he would say in sad resignation, " My sins were heavy ; why should I have better things ? " but more often it caused him to cry out in exultation, " Oh, the joy when my Saviour gives me release, the happiness when I cast off this torturing body, like the casting off of a soiled and torn old garment ! "

In his speech, he invariably struck a note of praise ; for him, there were mercies in his afflictions. " My illness brought me here ; had I been strong as other men, would I have known of salvation ? " And again,

"Why, the uselessness of my body shows me the love of my brothers. I cannot fasten a button; they come and fasten it for me. Without any feeling in my hands, without any light in my eyes, I yet have all I want." And perhaps the prettiest saying of all was given in answer to a remark which he took as undue pity: "Never mind, never mind, this is only my rainy season, after a spell of fine weather. Each life has fine, and each life has rain, and in mine there has been more fine than rain." More joy than sorrow in a leper's life! One would need to have stood beside him as he spoke, to have seen him as he was, in order to feel the pathos, the inspiration of such an utterance. It follows that such a man would be almost unduly grateful for very little kindness. A patch-work quilt was given him by a far-away friend. Who was not asked to count its "One hundred and twenty-one pieces, all of expensive cloth?" No quilt was ever so famous, and when a warm lining was added to it, a present from yet another friend, no grateful word message would have sufficed, the occasion demanded his very own letter, expressing a "whole-hearted mouthful of thanks."

He was released in sleep, after days of unconsciousness. What an awakening with a realization beyond his happiest dreaming!

"The place is cold and lonely without him," his brother-lepers said, but as stars shine out when the sun has set, so the lives of two other men shone with brighter Christian light—Dau-Da and Siu-Cheng, both equally ill and weak. Siu-Cheng is no man of words, but he can always tell of God's goodness to him; while Dau-Da is delightfully able to express his thoughts. He, strangely enough, was the pilot of a large tea boat, on which nine of us escaped to Foo-Chow, in the

Kien-Ning riot of 1899. But even then he had already heard of the "Creator God," having listened from time to time at a dispensary service, then held outside the walls of this city. What he heard was good, and he wanted good, but he was not prepared to be identified with a then despised band of men. He next sought his "good," in the cult of "Great Uncle," which, perhaps, is the best heathen worship that China has known of late years. Great Uncle, a man of the Kiang-si Province, has obtained a very strong hold on the minds of the people for healing of sickness and breaking off opium. Charmed tea and tea-leaves come much into use, but no idols or images are required, only a map of Great Uncle's region. The actual worship consists of reciting prayer-words, together with genuflections. But Great Uncle has nothing to give to a heart which has awakened to need of salvation. Dau-Da, when stricken with illness, came after a while to the Leper Village, and there, almost immediately, he saw, heard and believed. And since then is a much-saved man, "unto all patience . . . with joyfulness." He is often "nigh unto death," and at one such time, soon after his entrance, he earnestly pleaded for baptism, and straightway recovered strength when his request was granted. Towards the close of last summer he was very desirous that a right order should be observed at his funeral service. "How can I go now in our Pastor's absence? I very much want the Pastor, and not a Catechist, or a Church uncle, for the reading of my service." And the others, in full consent, told him he "truly must wait, and not set out before the return of Lu Mu-Su,[1] for unless it was he who read the service, how could it have taste

[1] The Rev. H. S. Phillips.

to any one ? " And Dau-Da was able to wait, and heartily welcomed his Pastor, not as a dying man, but in his usual measure of strength. We cannot explain the reason why lepers who long for release must yet live on and on, for a leper's spirit always seems loath to leave its poor, desolate, ruined home ; but we know that " the keys . . . of death " are kept by the lepers' Friend.

Dau-Da once paid a dream-visit to heaven, a dream-land experience delightfully real, and related in glad excitement :

" I was in heaven last night, in the shining streets, golden, smooth and wide. Young and full of strength, I walked on and on ; and the people who passed me were also young, each one about twenty years old, vigorous, free and happy. I came to a great and magnificent house, with very wide steps made of costly jade and a great entrance door inset with precious stones. As I stood looking and wondering, a slave girl opened the door, and pointing upwards said " See, there is a flag, and the name of the owner is on it.' Then, how my heart rejoiced, for did I not read ' Diau Sister ' ? ' Is she here, is she here ? ' I asked, and the slave girl answered, ' Not just yet ; she has a little more work to do in Kien-Ning, which soon will be finished, and then she will come.'

" Within, it looked cool and beautiful, for the hall was high and tiled with green jade, and the tiles at their corners were set with rare stones, while every pillar was deeply carved and bright with many jewels. ' Must you live there alone ? ' I asked. ' No, indeed, not alone, and this is your blessing, all your own family and all the blind children will every one be with you.'

" Yes, my own house, I found it too ; for was not my

name plainly written on a small flag hanging over its door? I quickly went in, and saw rows of young men, sitting most happily in the hall, but a voice called out these words to me: 'Brother, you have come here too soon; your fill of earth's sorrow is not yet eaten; you must return for a little while longer.' My sadness was very great, for I wanted to stay, and much did not want to return. While toiling down and down, again my body was all so weary, and then I awoke on earth. Now, with my own eyes, I have seen our homes, ready and waiting for us, so in gladness and patience we can wait until our Lord comes for us."

And so he still "eats his sorrow," and is ever an inspiration to us in his strong and beautiful hope. A blessing to his brother lepers, and especially to four quite young men, who have all their lives as lepers before them; but lepers "with hope in Christ" are not of all men most miserable.

> "To have His love, and know it ne'er can fail you,
> Is here to taste the rapture of the blest."

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 35, 37).

CHAPTER XIV.

OUT IN THE VILLAGES.

"To them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."—*St. Matt.* iv. 16.

IF we could look from a high place to the hundreds and thousands of villages throughout this country on the plains, by the rivers, nestling in valleys and against mountain sides, and see in imagination a light shining from the roof of each Christian home, would the thought of the unlit numbers be too appalling to allow of our pondering the mystery of selection? Why is there a gleam here, and a blaze there? Why are there vast stretches of land in total darkness? Look! up in that tiny hamlet there is one little flame, while away on a far-off plain a shimmering brilliance tells of many lights all close together. Even as you watch a new light sprung up in another direction; not only one, two, three, flickering in, out, in again. Will they remain? Let us leave our high place and come down to some homes with the shining roofs, and learn what we can of their earliest lighting.

It was a happy evening here, when Liong-Aing and Guang-Seng arrived back from a two months' stay in the village of Gi-iong-Gai, some twenty-six miles from this city. They came in so full of cheer and zeal, delightfully keen and well. This was their second visit, the first having taken place about three summers ago. Booksellers and others had preached there

before them, and all told of heathen crowds most willing to hear. It was in our women's former visit that some one called out one day, "Their words, telling about a Saviour, are good, good indeed; immediately write them down, for what is only heard by the ear the heart can quickly forget."

Last year a band of men inquirers came forward and sent repeated requests for a teacher, an evangelist, to be appointed to Gi-iong-Gai. They had hired a house to be our Church for Sunday and other services, and when the Rev. H. S. Phillips paid them a visit they gave him an exceedingly warm welcome. Miss Weekes and Mi-Ngi followed soon afterwards, and spent a most satisfactory fortnight, teaching and preaching from morning to evening, and returned filled with a longing desire to proclaim the Saviour in the numbers of outlying, unreached villages. Early this year Gi-iong-Gai was given a teacher—Catechist Li and his very good wife. The opportunity, however, remained principally amongst the men, so when Liong-Aing and Guang-Seng went there it was with their hearts set upon winning the women of the place, and especially the wives. Some forty men attended the Sunday services, and all seemed encouraging, when "there appeared the tares also." One of the number was involved in a law-suit, but of course the Church to which they had attached themselves would help them; and how could yamen power withstand Church power, put forth on their behalf? When word came that the Church could not and would not move in the matter and they had to accept the ruling as irrevocable, there was genuine dismay and a falling away, for they had yet to learn that "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Liong-Aing and Guang-Seng arrived just at this time of testing, when Mr. and Mrs. Li had left Gi-iong-Gai for a while on health grounds; and they shall tell their own story:—

"There was gladness when we arrived, and we were quickly helped to settle in and make arrangements for procuring our rice, wood and water. On the next day we began visiting the houses where four years before there had been willingness to hear and learn. Many recognized us, a few remembered the former teaching, and nearly all wanted to give us things to eat. On Sunday, over forty people came in to service, and earliest of all a man of about fifty years of age, who lived in a village five miles away. This brother has only been thrice absent from the Sunday service for more than two years. No extreme of heat, cold or wet could keep him from walking in. His women-folk are angry with him for doing no work, and going to play one day in each seven, but when speaking of their scolding mouths, he said, "Let them be, let them scold; their anger is useless; women cannot have much understanding." He used to carry a small load of saleable wood, not so much for gain as to hide his service-going intention, and he brought it to those whom he knew to be interested in the Doctrine. If they invited him to dinner he gave them his wood; indeed, he only sold it when he had occasion to buy his own meal at a rice shop. But now his courage is big, he does not want to hide his intention, so comes openly to Church, with his books tied up in a large handkerchief, in order that all may recognize him as a worshipping God-man. Before Mr. Li went away, he entrusted the leading of the services to this man. Now, as he arrived and saw us, he said, "It is you two honourable preach-

ing-doctrine Church-mothers who will lead the Sunday worship for as long as you are here."

"Not so," answered Guang-Seng, "there are more men than women in this congregation; as in the City Church at morning service, it is a man who should lead and preach." "But," continued Liong-Aing, "as I watched the order of that day's worship, my heart felt hot with pity for the people who were receiving nothing. The brother read the Lessons according to classical character, and did not translate into the dialect, therefore the meaning was not understood, and even with the Prayer Book he did not seem to be very well acquainted; but when the preaching time came, it was more surprising still, for he only said, "Now this morning worship is finished." Then every one talked until dinner time. This method, how could it do? Truly, it very much would not do, and I said to Guang-Seng, "You and I are here as God's messengers; even if no women at all come next Sunday, we will lead this service, and trusting the Holy Spirit to help us, we will give them the true inside-heart food from the Bible. But still Guang-Seng said, "At morning worship it is a man's work to lead and preach." Upon the following Sunday, this brother again arriving early, said, "I request you honourable Church-mothers to take this worship for us." At once, I answered, "Good, we will gladly do so." At this, Guang-Seng remained silent, but he was relieved and pleased. That day the people listened earnestly; no one wanted either to talk or to sleep. But the third Sunday we had cause to laugh. On Saturday night I became ill, my body burned with fever for some hours, and I did not want to get up in the morning. "Now, Guang-Seng," I smilingly said, "your turn has come; it is you who must preach." "Yes,"

Guang-Seng answered, "it is indeed a no-help thing."

She preached from Daniel iii. and evidently with power. The people were surprised and exclaimed, "Such words are rarely heard; they very much enter into us."

"With the exception of Sundays, we went out into the town every day, and could have preached to large crowds in all public places. "Why go elsewhere? Here, where you are, preach your Book," was called out by men as we passed along; but we faced quieter places, and the insides of houses, so as to reach women who can seldom listen well in the presence of their menkind. Once, when on our way to a side street, we heard these words spoken quite in anger, "You who preach Doctrine, have we men no ears? What if we are men, do we not also want to hear?" But it was best to follow our own plan, and almost every day for two months we spent hours in three or four houses, preaching to audiences numbering from ten to one hundred. Perhaps the daily average was between forty and seventy. Indeed, our mouths had but little rest. When men came in and disturbed a woman's assembly, I used a little power and commanded them either to leave the place at once or else to sit down and quietly listen. For some time it was a woman, an arguing woman, who troubled us most; where we were, there she was, thinking to overcome us with her cleverness. "Idols are to be seen," she would say. "Your God, have you seen Him? Give us proof that He is." "Alas!" exclaimed Guang-Seng in reply, "alas!" China has no king, and China has no president, for who in Gi-iong-Gai has seen either king or president? You search the heavens by night for a sun; it is not to be seen; therefore in the heavens there is no sun. Yet, even Gi-iong-Gai is ruled by a president, and this

moment is under a shining sun. In the presence of this arguing woman, I appeal to you all, Is there a sun?" "Yes, yes." "A president?" "Yes." "Can God be, even if He has not been seen by the people of this town? Look up, look around; in your hearts you know that He is. It is He Whom we are here to proclaim as the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of all living things, the one and only true God."

"That woman was each time discomfited, and after a while, because people laughed at her, she left us alone. Occasionally, the woman we preached to were indifferent; we might have been offering them lukewarm tea, for which they need only say "thank you," but need not drink. Sometimes, although not indifferent, yet they were not ready to take, and it was as if we were offering some very strong medicine, trying to force it into their mouths; they knew it was good and would do them good, but what might not people say if they actually swallowed it then? More often they really wanted to hear, and we felt we were giving hot, fragrant tea to weary and thirsty men.

"'Who could follow this teaching? It is high, it is deep. Under the heavens, is there a living man who truly obeys these precepts?' questioned an elderly gentleman who had been listening in silence. 'Thank God,' answered Liong-Aing, 'by the help of His Holy Spirit all can follow, and all can obey, for the Bible is like a cap, which fits on the head of both old and young, of each one who really wishes to wear it.'

"There is a great deal of gambling by all classes of men and women at Gi-iong-gai. One day we found ourselves in a house where, in the large hall, at six tables, there were people playing. For the moment we were more important to them than the game. "Sit down and preach," they called, and with one consent waited.

They inclined their ears to hear, and when some one suggested the advisability of counting the money lying out on the tables, they answered almost impatiently, "The money, let it be; words like these have not been heard here before." About this time it seemed that if we could have said, "Worship the true God and stay as you are, gamble, eat opium, and sin as before," all in the town would have willingly worshipped. But, when it meant a "Narrow road," the complete forsaking of sin and repentance unto salvation, it was a Doctrine they could not follow: and yet, many believed in God, and undoubtedly wanted salvation."

Some women, then attending the services, were even, according to heathen standard, counted unworthy, and Liong-Aing, when alone with them, said, in her faithful dealing, "You are still living in sin; until you mean to repent, coming to Church will do you no good. It is as if vegetables were put in a pot to cook on the fire, but the pot is made of a metal which cannot take heat; therefore, what is it that happens? The pot, keeping cold, hides out the fire from others that need it, and if the vegetables in it are left long enough, they will surely decay and then be thrown out."

At the close of two months our women were glad to come home, though not in order to rest, for the very joy of their work had refreshed them in spirit and body; but because they knew a full measure of seed had been sown in the highways and byways of Giiong-Gai, as well as in outlying villages. Of course they had longed, before their return, to see women boldly confessing their faith; but most surely that gladness will be given them yet. At present there are some ten men coming to Church quite regularly, and lately the good, steadfast "brother," already men-

tioned, was baptized by the Rev. H. S. Phillips. Yes, a light has " sprung up " in that region, and God grant it may shine with an increase of brightness unto the praise of His glory. If we ask once again how the first spark appeared in this near, or that far-away place, one answer might certainly be, " By the means of such an itineration as that undertaken by Liong-Aing and Guang-Seng."

Itinerating has been called " The cream of the work," and in its simple following of our Lord's own method, in its freshness of daily telling of the " News" to those who have never heard it before, the description is very true. Those of our number who itinerate most would perhaps be prepared to say that no other work brings them so close to the heart of the Lord, in His yearning seeking for souls, and that therein lies its joy. There is no other work which provides the same scope for keeping under the body, to bring it into subjection. It means an utter lack of privacy, of cleanliness and ease ; it means accommodation absurdly poor, and it teaches how to do without some " necessaries " of life. What but the all-enabling " For His Name's sake," and the urgent following of a gleam, could constrain to the spending of weeks in such surroundings as Miss Boaz describes in the following account, and yet which contain some " luxuries " such as light and air :—

" We arrived at the village, not knowing where we were going to stay, but were directed to the house of a man who has just entered the preparation class for baptism at Sung-Ki. We were warmly welcomed and shown up, at our own request, to the attic loft, which from floor to roof is not seven feet in height, and at the sides much less. Hopeless indeed it looked at first, but when it was cleared and partially cleaned

conditions were improved. Of course there were no doors or windows, but the latter are not necessary, as one side of the loft is open to wind and weather, and the other three are so full of holes that light and air are plentiful. The furniture is composed of ancient, grimy rubbish superannuated from below, and a large rice box and smaller tubs which, upside down, make excellent seats and tables. We also have weird-looking weapons of defence and offence; one, a kind of sword; and the other, a sharpened iron dagger, kept, they say, to frighten thieves. We have managed to put two beds in the room, one for the Bible-woman and one for myself. Hers is a simple arrangement—two long stools, a few planks placed across, and on top a thin straw mattress; mine is even more simple, consisting of a door from downstairs taken off its hinges and placed upon two forms. Rats? Oh, yes, of course; so a mosquito net is hung up as a protection. And as we settled in, there were women visitors and children, standing, sitting, examining our possessions, inquisitively fingering things, and asking many questions. "How old are you?" "Is she (the Bible-woman) your daughter, or is she not your daughter-in-law?" "You are unmarried? Then you will easily get to heaven, and your happiness is great." They are invited to sit on the beds and tubs, and after much persuasion quietly listen to the Good News for the first time from the lips of the earnest young Bible-woman, as she tries to set before them the riches of God's grace, long-suffering and patience in seeking His lost sheep."

"O Lord, my God, . . . give to Thy servant such a love, that whatsoever, in Thy service may happen contrary to flesh and blood, I may not feel it; that humility may be my sanctuary, and Thy service the joy of my soul. Amen."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

CHAPTER XV.

UNTO OLD AGE AND GREY HAIRS.

"The Levites . . . from the age of fifty, shall return from the warfare of the service."—*Num.* viii. 25 (margin).

OUR fine old Cuoi-Sang, with threescore years and ten behind her, is still actively engaged in the warfare of the work. She is a warrior whose horizon is not bounded by age-limit, for she contemplates a service leading up to the skyline. Long after the year of a Levite return, she began active service, in conflict with sin, the world and the devil; at first in Nang-Wa, where she was living, and then as one of a little band, who, from the well-worn Nang-Wa battle-field, accompanied Miss Coleston, Miss Boaz and Miss Stinson to the less trodden ground of Sung-Ki. The following sketch, which Miss Boaz has given of her Christian life, is of necessity only outline; for who could attempt to fill in the incidents of her eventful days? Her tactics and methods are often unique; she aims at a glorious end, which justifies means of quaint design, and brooks but little control. Perhaps her very independence and inimitable personality are gifts of no less value to the Kien-Ning Church than the service she is rendering.

"A succourer of many." These words might in truth be written over the life of Cuoi-Sang—"Born again," as her name implies. She entered slowly into the light about fifteen years ago, out of a life of sin and darkest heathenism; but when the dawn broke clearly upon her mind and conscience, it meant severance from the old sin, the devilry and idolatry, and a

whole-hearted turning to God, without a look behind. She believed in the willingness of God not only to forgive all sin, but also to deliver from the sicknesses of her heathen life, and since then has magnified the grace of God both for herself and others. She had heard the Gospel story preached by the "foreign sisters" for years before believing, and once was led by a Christian aunt to see "how God was worshipped." "Do as we do," the others said, and so she did as they did; knelt when they knelt, but understood very little. The next definite link in the chain that drew her to the Lord Jesus was the sorrow caused by a wicked son who, from being a slave to the opium habit, became an outcast thief. His mother never forsook him, and when he was very ill she brought him to the Nang-Wa hospital, where she helped to nurse him. While attending prayers and listening to the teaching, she at last learned to trust the Lord Jesus for salvation. When they left the hospital the son plunged into worse and worse sin, until he died under a tree outside Nang-Wa town, but not alone, for his heart-sore, praying mother was with him to the end. Not long after this she came to be cook in the mission house, a plan suggested mainly in order to keep her still in touch, and to teach her the doctrine more perfectly. During this time she seldom lost an opportunity of helping those around her and exhorting them to worship God; the desire grew in her heart to give her whole time to work for God. "I earnestly prayed," she said, "that God would open a road for me to walk on, and He never remembered my sins, but answered my prayer in three days. Leng sister [1] called me for a talk, and asked me if I would like to be more free to work for God, and I gladly answered, 'Yes.'" Then

[1] Miss Fleming.

her real training began as a "Servant of God, and of the Church," and to her faithfulness in serving and succouring others many men and women in four of Kien-Ning's seven countries can bear a grateful witness. "I began to worship God far too late in life," she has often said to crowds when on itinerating tours. "If only in my younger days I had known to worship God, I surely would have suffered less, for it was through 'much tribulation' that I became a Christian. My money and my substance have gone in careless living, as well as idol-worship; and of that what is left? But I thank God for the great change in my inner and outer life, since I turned to Him."

Like her Master, she has compassion on the multitudes, and is always at her best when standing up before a big, unwieldly crowd of heathen men and women, telling the "Story of the Cross" over and over again, catching, holding attention by good use of Chinese proverbs and Chinese well-known sayings. With head erect and sparkling eyes, she sometimes seems inspired while closing her address with a very solemn warning, "Oh, if you will not believe in God, if you will not cast away sin and give up idolatry, you are lost men and women, and will die in your sins; but why need you be lost? This in the day of salvation; turn, turn to the Lord and be found of Him."

Two traits in her Christian character stand out above the rest, and these are love and faith. She has received, no doubt, of the love that loves on to the end and covers sins. She has the power of holding on in work and prayer for individual souls, until they are truly saved; and she has faith in God's grace and power, and in the ability of men and women to receive it, which wins its way through all difficulty.

A short time ago, as she and a companion were returning home from visiting in heathen houses, they were attracted to a place where a noisy group of women had collected. Some of them were sitting, others standing ; some were laughing, others weeping ; and all were speaking in loud excitement. " Come and see for yourself," they replied in answer to her questioning. " I went and saw," she said ; " saw on the rubbish heap close by an almost naked infant, thrown away to die, and on the rubbish heap beside it the mother of the baby sat, wailing in her bitter weeping, ' No healing, no healing for it.' I quickly drew near and listened to hear if the child was still breathing ; yes, it had still a little breath, so I gathered the dying babe in my arms, knelt on the ground and prayed to God that He would heal the child. Then I gave him to the mother, commanding her sternly to care for him and put on his clothes again. Then I rushed to the garden and looked for herbs to make some good herb tea, for sometimes, you know, our Chinese medicine suits little children best, and green herbs were made by God. Then I gave my medicine tea to the child and prayed with strength that God would have mercy on the poor mother and heal her precious boy. For two nights and two days I very much prayed ; I tended him carefully and gave him herb tea, when lo ! as the cock crew on the second night he was able to take milk. I was glad, exceedingly glad, and now the child is strong and well, all by the grace of God, and in answer to my prayer."

Cuoi-Sang is not perfect by any means ; she has sinned and suffered much even since she became a Christian ; yet her love for God and for men and women is sincere and deep and strong, and her faith in God's grace and power remains steadfast and unshaken. It may be that of her God " counts no hours but unclouded ones."

There are veteran, warrior women-workers connected with most of our mission stations who keenly regret their younger years and thankfully, eagerly use old age to tell of God's goodness to them, as if to do at sunset some piece of work which might have been done by the light of day. Has not each one of them cried with Cuoi-Sang, "If only in my younger days I had known to worship God"? or uttered that plaintively tacit reproach, "Oh that in my earlier years some one had come to tell me of this, then, would I not have been of use in the doing of God's work! While now, my memory and eyesight, ability and strength of body, are quickly going from me."

But who may judge the value of work by the number of years it covers? 'For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man' who went out five times through the day, at dawn, forenoon, noon, afternoon, and last of all towards sunset "to hire labourers into his vineyard." Then at the evening reckoning he treated all alike, and paid his servants with these words, "So the last shall be first, and the first last, for many be called, but few chosen."

We have lately parted with a veteran Church member who is worthy of mention in connection with this City Church since its first beginnings. Through her later years she was hardly ever absent from the Sunday services, even when she had attained to over fourscore years. Once, owing to a late arrival, she did not sit in her usual place, so we thought she had not come, and next day went to call upon her, fearing she was ill. Then an apology was needed, to atone for our mistake. Next Sunday, the opening sentences for the women's evening service were already being read, when up the central aisle Da-Uing slowly walked, using her mother-

gamp umbrella as a noisy walking stick, until, with a resounding tap, she stood before the reading-desk and announced in a voice that all could hear, " Peace, sister, peace ! Now I have arrived, to-day your eyes will see me " ; then, satisfied, she went to her seat and the service was continued !

Da-Uing, in her Church-going, will ever be remembered by three distinctive marks—a foreign-kingdom white (?) umbrella, a large, very red handkerchief and a pair of beaded cuffs. The first announced her coming, for it tapped the ground with a clinking sound for every step she took. It had long, long passed its days either for sun or rain, but a piece of blue braid, tied round as a band, kept the limp ribs together and made it look like a once good-looking umbrella. The handkerchief came every year as one of her Christmas gifts, and she loved it for its brightness as well as for its size. It needed careful folding into well-marked lines, as it had to hang on the pew in front before she could settle down, and there it was to gaze at in open admiration at every service on every Sunday all the whole year round, until it gave place on Christmas Day to another as good to see. But even these handkerchiefs and the pleasure they gave had to give way to the steel-beaded cuffs : " Made purposely for me by a love-heart sister, whose face I have never seen, for over the sea she lives, a thousand myriad miles away. Who under the heaven, even when young, has had such beautiful cuffs ! And here am I, old and no use, wearing them as my own. Loved, am I not loved ? " she would ask her groups of admiring friends, who freely fingered the beads, while wondering at the skilful way they were worked in with the wool. Then, in church, she sat with the handkerchief hanging up before her, and laid her two hands on her knees, with the glittering bead-cuffed wrists,

displayed in all their glory. That rapt attention, was it in the service, and whence those smiles of satisfaction? But who could venture to reprove? They told her she was loved by one she had never seen, and that love to these people expresses God's love to them, and hence our gladness as transmitters of the yearly gifts, sent out from home, for they help us all to realize that we are "One in Christ Jesus."

At Da-Uing's funeral, the coffin, as she had requested, was carried through the city streets out to the "Happy Garden,"* covered with a patchwork quilt of very many colours—a characteristic touch, showing to the very end an appreciative gratitude of her sisters' presents.

Twenty-one years ago she learned to believe in God, and the story is interesting as connected with our very early visits to this then unopened city. In 1894 Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer spent the summer in a mountain village, about ten miles away. From there they preached and healed the sick in all the villages around. Soon after their departure a married daughter from the city came to visit her own people in the place where they had stayed, and there heard of the "Foreign women," their "Good teaching" and wonderful "Western medicines." While hearing of them from one and another she was seized with a strong desire to know more, and when she returned to her home actually went off to Nang-Wa, some sixteen miles down river, to invite the two sisters who had been to those villages to go to her house in the city and preach their very good news. A wonderful invitation to bring and a real act of courage to bring it, for the City was then firmly closed and altogether opposed to the foreigners and their Message. Only once before had ladies been within its walls, when Miss Inie Newcombe and Miss Johnson went

* Since re-named "The Garden of Rest."

quietly in from Ciong-Bau, at the urgent request of their language teacher, then himself an inquirer, who wished that his women-folk should hear the Truth for themselves. They stayed two days in his home, and were treated as honoured guests. Now a second opportunity had come for stealing in behind the walls, and indeed the invitation was exceedingly appealing. The woman promised all protection as far as she could give it, and of course the sisters were to go entirely as her guests. After prayer and consultation, they faced the fortress, for a four days' visit. Secretly they entered, in closely covered chairs, and spent the first half of the time strictly behind closed doors. Then the strange fact of their presence was somehow "noised abroad," and crowds and crowds surged in to see what the strangers were like, and surely, too, to hear what they had come to say. Then they returned to Nang-Wa, longing more than ever for the time which they knew was coming when the walls of opposition would "fall down flat" for the entrance of God's Word, and echoed in anticipation some words of long ago, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city."

Doubtless Da-Uing really believed from the very beginning, and at that time she preached of "The One true God" to all around her, but it may be that she did not know her need of a personal saving. Gladly she went to Nang-Wa to stay for several weeks, in order to learn foundation Truth and more of the Gospel story. She wanted, in her preaching, to have wherewith to teach. But, alas! "the cares of this world" slowly choked "the Word" in her heart, and she became "unfruitful." Still, she never lost her belief in God, and never returned to idol-worship; only for such a long, long time she would not forsake some heathen ways which darkened her Christian walk, and full

thirteen years had to pass by before she could be baptized ; but in the mercy of God for her, there was light at evening time. Shall we have one more memory touch of this dear old woman, one that seems to join together the beginning and end of our friendship with her ? Last June some bands of insurgent rebels were causing trouble in parts of the Province. From Ku-Tien they marched on in their pride, coming to quell the cities of Kien-Ning by their might. The cities of Ching-Ho and Sung-Ki gave up their arms, as well as the money demanded by the rebels, but at Pu-Cheng they showed fight. Forewarned, forearmed, this city stationed soldiers at the gates and ordered early closing. But when news came that Yen-Ping was attacked, things looked much more serious, and one Sunday morning, after Church, the streets were full of frightened men, for the gates had all been shut at midday. Our women came to the afternoon service, quiet and apprehensive, and some of them wished to stay the night, so as to be together ; but Da-Uing took no thought for any but her "Sister." "Come back with me now to my house," she urged, "and I will keep you closely, closely hidden in my bedroom, and there the rebels will not find you, for it is small and dark." "But what of the family here," was asked, "the blind and crippled little ones—could they be left alone while their mother hides in safety ?" "Have no fear for the children," she answered ; "commit them all to the keeping of God and let me take care of you." On a steamy hot June night, between the rebels and her keeping there might not be much to choose, but one loved her for the kindly thought and the quaint, refreshing touch that the children God alone could keep, but for me He needed her.

CHAPTER XVI.

FASTING GRANDMOTHERS.

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind. . . . Therefore I turned about to cause my heart to despair concerning all the labour wherein I had laboured."—*Eccles.* ii. 11, 20.

TWENTY-ONE years ago, in this then unopened city, a dear old lady, some seventy years of age, rose to a degree of faith, and of friendliness towards us, which even in an opened city has seldom since been attained to, and certainly not surpassed.

Da-Uing naturally told her friends about the one true God, and amongst them was a temple-woman who for herself and others prepared for welfare in advance by her bead-telling. She heard and believed with joy, though at that time she did not cease from the worship of idols. There really was a Saviour, and in Him complete salvation. Indeed she would trust in One Who had given His life for her. Da-Uing's "Foreign sisters" were just then staying at Seven Stars Bridge, not two miles away, and she was ordered to invite them quickly to her house, so that from their own lips she might hear for herself. As they came in, they were watched and followed, and the whole afternoon found them preaching to a crowd, in the midst of which was one whose heart was crying out in hunger for deeper Truth than the crowd demanded. Then it was time for the foreign

sisters to go, but oh! her hand had not clasped her Saviour's Hand, nor had her heart met His in that mighty love-embrace which binds in an unending union the Saviour and the saved. How could she let them leave! Had they not come to her, and as yet she had heard so little. What if they could not come again, and she never had another chance of hearing from them of One in Whom to trust. So, regardless of the fearsome, wicked and cruel deeds which "people said" the foreigners did, and for which they were regarded and despised as barbarians, she said simply and firmly, "I must hear more of this; you cannot both stay, then one of you please remain and spend the night with me." So Miss Rodd returned to Seven Stars Bridge, and Miss Johnson gladly accepted the invitation, marvelling at such faith and beautiful fearlessness, and gladly shared not only a room but also a bed with her hostess. Indeed, she felt wholly honoured in being the guest of one, within the walls of Kien-Ning City, who, for the sake of the Master, welcomed her, His servant, as a very dear sister-friend. Heart-moving joy was in that evening's work. It was one of those privileges which suddenly come in the daily round, and fill it with heavenly gladness.

The old lady was frail and feeble, so instead of going, as other women, to a temple for bead-telling, she had a little room set apart in her own house to serve her as an oratory. There she burnt her incense and regularly told her beads, and there she kept the large, red temple basket containing all things requisite for this special worship. But now they were all of no use; the shadows were left behind, for her face was towards her "Father's House."

She gave up burning incense and telling beads,

and soon the dust lay thickly in the neglected oratory. She wanted to destroy the temple things, but courage sank before the opposition such a daring act would rouse, and yet they weighed upon her spirit. She who belonged to God, kept in her own possession what now she counted "Devil's things." Was the way too hard for her feet just there? Was she carried over the roughest place, where she could not walk? For, lo and behold! one morning they were every one of them gone; a thief in the night had broken in and stolen them. And of course she took the act as a proof of her Father's love, for now in spirit, soul and body she was absolutely free to serve Him evermore. Miss Johnson saw her only once more in the two years which elapsed before another entrance to the city was obtained; meanwhile her dear old friend had entered into rest. Her memory inspires hope that she may be the firstfruits of very many from amongst the hundreds of praying women in the temples throughout this city to-day who will, like her, without a word, rise up and follow Christ.

No doubt it is well for the old and elderly women in Chinese homes that there is an occupation which only they can follow. It gives them an aim in life, with a measure of independence, and lessens the burden of that constant cry, "Old people are no use." And this bead-telling praying is important work, for in the unseen world the welfare of their future existence greatly depends upon it. The women's prevailing motive in this temple-worship is to preclude the possibility of ever being sent to Hell: to provide for themselves in Hades the money which all must have, in order to secure a share of happiness; and while there to attain, by honoured, righteous living, to an unknown number of re-births on earth, each

one in a better state, until by the process of evolution the utmost extreme of merit admits them to heaven's halls, where they may sit in high estate as spirits no longer subject to change, represented on earth in idol form and worshipped by beings still in the lower state. Perhaps their thoughts seldom dwell on the far-off future, for they concentrate their minds on the making of merit-money which, when they pass away from this world, will be theirs to use as current coin. It is made to a reiterated recital of several idols' names,worked out from the six character phrase—"Nang u, O-mi-dah-fuh." The last four syllables may contain the name of Amida-Buddha, but the term is merely a transliteration of certain Sanscrit sounds. So many recitals to certain beads make up one hundred cash, so many beads to little cords count as one thousand coins.

It is very heart-moving to enter a temple full of idols, dimly lit, fragrant and hazy with burning incense, and look from the figures of wood and stone to these praying women, sitting amongst the images, on their comfortless forms, an expression of heavy hopelessness saddening each one's face, as over and over again, in drearily dull monotony, the chorus of "O-mi-dah-fuh. Nang u, O-mi-dah-fuh" rises and falls in even chanting to the gentle sound of their passing beads. Not lightly earned is this merit-money; the toil of their lips is in it. The name by which they are commonly known translates as "Fasting grandmothers," for they take the vegetarian vow when they "Ascend to the temple."

The ordering of this special worship brings us into the spirit realm in such a material way that real and unreal, tangible and intangible, become strangely intermingled.

Spirit Cong-Guing is responsible for the management of these women's affairs through their everyday existence. To him they offer the merit-money, to him they burn the merit-incense; and as he receives it from them, he passes it on to spirit Hu-Sa, who, when they arrive in Hades, will give each one her own, but, until they arrive, he places it all in Spirit Chong's bank, where, under the skilful conduct of accountant Spirit Li, it accumulates merit-interest.

When a man or woman dies, a Hades habitation must always be ensured, so, even for the poorest, the semblance of a paper house is transmitted by burning. But a rich temple-woman not only provides in advance her merit-wealth, but also an extensive wardrobe, and her own grand house. For this she requires the service of several Buddhist priests. Then on some open space of ground, a framework, coloured paper house, in great section pieces, is quickly put together. It may cost as much as $300,[1] and be sufficiently large to allow of people, in little groups, to move about freely. Its fittings are perfectly correct in detail and the furniture is complete according to each room. No sooner is it erected than its paper doors are sealed with paper, and after a few moments of furious flaring, nothing remains but ashes. But a woman peering into the darkness ahead, sees a shadowy home awaiting, and the thought of it comforts her heart as the darkness closes in around her.

There is also the earning of real money in the temple-worship, for people pay the praying-women to make them merit-gold, so the poor amongst them are almost self-supporting, instead of helplessly dependent upon a begrudged living, with their own descendants.

Often and often when we visit temples, one or more

[1] £30.

of these women, and occasionally all, will cease from their chanting to listen in breathless interest to the story of the Saviour, Whose merit is all-sufficient, the Saviour, Who is the Way to the Father and the Home He has gone to prepare for His own. Sometimes they say sadly, "Good, most good, but it is not for us. How would our children be willing to keep us? Could we not earn for ourselves?" or more decidedly still, "Your doctrine we cannot receive, for if we gave up this chanting, what rice should we have to eat?" Were it possible that we could answer, "Rice, we will give you rice, we will support and keep you, only give up this bead-telling work," a very few might accept the offer; but would it assuredly lead to the saving of their souls? The many would go on their way, ignoring the invitation, from fear of offending their patron spirits, or fear of loss in the unseen world, or fear of the foreign people.

Just a few in all Kien-Ning have, with a stupendous faith, let go of all they trusted in for this and the future life, because the love of Jesus Christ appealed to their hearts in compelling wonder, casting out fear, and brought them to His side, as little, trustful children.

Oh, that in these coming days many more may hear that Voice! Could we see them all together, each one's life-day nearing twilight, hear their chorus swell of chanting, watch the moving of their hands up and down the long bead lines, see their wearied hopeless faces; would the pathos of the sight move our hearts in supplication for our sisters in their thraldom, as they truly, in their error, seek to work out a salvation?

"Yea, in Thy Name we will arise and free them,
Jesus, Thou Son of God, Who givest Rest;
Thy Name the charm that breaks their soul's long bondage,
Thy Name the answer to their hearts' long quest."

There is much of this merit-seeking among men and women in Kien-Ning. How many there are of all classes, who, for that purpose alone, take on themselves for life the vegetarian vow [1]; some in a rigorous continuity, some for the first half of each month, and some for nine days in the month, where figures of one, four and seven recur. This tells of inborn religion in the hearts of many heathen, and makes us long with intense desire that such should come into touch with One, Who waits to meet their soul-need.

Now and then a really wicked man, awakening to a terrifying sense of a threatening hell, suddenly decides to become a vegetarian, to "make his soul" in the best way he knows, and so avert punishment for all his wicked deeds, in horrible awful torments, past describing.

But more often the vow is taken by those who are by nature gentle, and who earnestly want to be good. Heathen respect and honour is freely bestowed upon such for their abstemious living and careful attention to every detail of idol-worship. They are workers of righteousness, forsaking the things of this world and "declaring plainly that they seek a country."

The vegetarian's patron saints are three good-natured brothers, who ward off evil influence from their true adherents. These brothers are pleased when their followers say, "Yes, we serve 'Three Officer' idols, and obtain their constant help"; and more pleased when incense and food is offered in three portions, one for each of them. Such worshippers feel sure of protection in special times of need. For instance, should they step on to an unsafe boat, a

[1] A very simple rice and vegetable diet, with total abstinence from all that makes for Chinese good-living.

spirit-voice would be clearly heard, warning of the danger.

Perhaps this thought of kindly spirit-care and the honour given to vegetarians by both man and spirit, together with the pleasant thought of accumulating merit, may relieve many from undue irksomeness in the keeping of their vow. But when such a one becomes a Christian and a higher vow is taken which necessitates a broken allegiance to the idol-spirits, there is cost in the separation and suffering for righteousness' sake. Daily opposition must be endured from the perturbed household, for even the kindest spirits become vindictive when defied. But the redeemed one trusts an Almighty Keeper, Who leads her up the narrow way towards her Heavenly Home, whispering comfort into her heart where it is hard to walk. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Perhaps the saddest women in this city are the ten to twenty Buddhist nuns who live in certain idol-temples, supported by temple doles; for, although vegetarians in the strictest sense, they win for themselves but little respect, as many fail deplorably to live good heathen lives. Their separation vow is seldom taken with a sense of true vocation, but usually as relief from lives of sordid misery. Ill-used wives and friendless widows, desolate women, sick with sadness, find that all in the world is "a striving after wind," and so in theory, if not in practice, they utterly forsake it. Some return to it after a while, but for such as endure to the end there is hope of exemption from descent into Hades or further existence on earth, for these expect to receive when they die an immediate ascent to heaven's hall, there to reign as spirits, with an idol representation in the world they

have forsaken. Because of this hope, neither priests nor nuns are buried like other people, who will require their bodies in Hades; there being no further use for bodies, they are placed immediately after death in a sitting position, and carried in a closed sedan-chair outside one of the city gates, and there, built round with wood in pyramid form, they are cremated. When a nun takes her vow on "Ascending the temple," it involves an entrance fee of $20 or $40, or an equivalent; she submits to the shaving of her head, the unbinding of her feet, and the adoption of a common, Buddhist priest-like dress. The shaving of the head includes a testing burning, for seven times the scalp is touched with red-hot ash, dropped from the burning end of an incense stick, and her manner of endurance is taken as an indication as to whether she can reach her ultimate salvation.

The name by which they are known, "Ni" or "Mi-Gu" (gu=girl), connects them with Buddha himself. It is the last syllable of Shakya-muni in its Chinese form of Si-gia Me-Ni. And their special worship is directed to the "Twenty-four Personages of the Heavens," female deities who in their state of exalted tranquillity ensure for their devotees an immediate ascent to the higher regions when they pass from this world. In the heathen religious mind this is a consummation of bliss which few may hope to reach.

One result of the present nun system leads to dreadful abuse. The nuns adopt little children, who, when they come to a certain age on a priest-chosen day, must, without any option, take the full Mi-Gu vow. Even a mother, as a deed of merit, brings her child who is sickly and she thinks deprived of spirit-favour to one of the nunnery temples, and there apprentices

her to a nun, and the child grows up in a place where a name of merit can cover sin, with unthinkable moral results.

About forty years ago the nuns of this city brought themselves into such utter contempt that the local mandarin ruled the disbandment of them all. The method he planned displayed a Chinaman's sense of humour, for it was really very ludicrous. He decreed that the nuns must become wives for wifeless men; but some were old and some were young, some were ugly and ill-favoured, others were handsome and "good to love." "Put them each one in a bag," he said, "and then, on a specified day, these nun-bags shall stand in the temple hall, and there be sold by weighing them at eighteen cash a pound."

The wifeless men arrived and looked upon the bags, wondering whether it was best to choose a light or a heavy one, and each man greatly hoped that the hidden contents of the bag be secured would give him a pleasant surprise.

It is possibly well that the story does not continue.

DAN-DA, THE LEPER SAINT.

THE ONLY TOMB IN KIEN-NING.

CHAPTER XVII.

HEATHENISM IN KIEN-NING.

"Who will bring me into the strong city?"—*Psa.* lx. 9.

"Thus saith the Lord. . . . I will go before thee, . . . I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."—*Isa.* xlv. 2.

"And the idols shall utterly pass away . . . from the glory of His majesty."—*Isa.* ii. 18, 21.

"The Lord alone shall be exalted."—*Isa.* ii. 17.

KIEN-NING CITY, as shown by the existence of our six Mission Compounds, is certainly open to foreign occupation, but can the foreigners living in these Compounds say that the city lies open before them?

If the multitude of houses within its walls be compared to a great mansion, can we flatter ourselves that the entrance already obtained extends farther than to the guest hall? There we sit giving our Message to all who are willing to hear it, hoping for more calls to pass in behind the carved, wooden doors which act as effectual screens between us and the inner circle of family life. We are grateful, however, to be in the guest hall and not, as formerly, pacing the street outside praying for an opening of barred doors.

It is because we are still on the outer side of the screens that mothers, upon our approach, cover the faces of their babes for fear of the change that might take place should foreigners "overlook" them: and little children in their play, suddenly seeing us coming

towards them, will run like hares to the nearest shelter, lest, in the words of the household threat, the terrible "upside-down ones" have really and truly come to snatch them away, perhaps, to cook and eat them. This explains, too, why when visiting we may be received, for a time, on friendliest terms, and then be told regretfully by the ladies that their menkind are unwilling for further intercourse between our houses, and it has to cease as completely as if it had never existed. It explains also why in our Women's Hospital there are always beds waiting for sick folk who will not go and fill them, and why there are very few scholars from heathen homes in our day and boarding schools. And the cause of our non-admittance behind the screens lies in the one word *fear*. We are supposed to possess supernatural powers and influence. This is expressed in the old-time saying, "If you drink tea at the foreigner's house, their Doctrine as likely as not you will also have to eat."

Sick people need courage to face a place wherein is a "cutting-one-open knife," as well as "sleeping medicine" (chloroform), but the reluctance of heathen parents to send us their girls to teach gives the cause of the fear and touches the root of the matter. Our education and foreign Doctrine are naturally indivisible, so only when parents are willing to risk the entrance of Christianity into their homes will they entrust their girls to our care. No Christian man, woman or child ever retains an atom of this foreigner-fear; they stand with us shoulder to shoulder and bravely seek to contend with it. We have laughed at the story of the man who said, when seeing us take a door-step refuge from a herd of big horned buffalos, "These are Christian,[1] not heathen buffalos; they are gentle and

[1] Dairy buffalos, kept by a Church member.

know you"; but it illustrates the fact that fear and Christian knowledge are really not co-existent, while fear and heathenism are united by "the father of lies" from whose enslaving chain the multitudes under his rule are not easily released. Bearing this in view, we can, in the strength of One he fears, seek to unloose the chain which binds in different ways his learned and ignorant prisoners. Do these prisoners, these "raw heathen" know of his existence; are they consciously aware that he is their ruler? Yes, so consciously aware that we have little more to teach of him than that his name is "Satan" and "Apollyon," with certain limitation to his mighty working. They know him as the spirit-king of spirit-kings, the spirit-lord of spirit-lords in Heaven, Hell and Hades; they believe that in their destiny his power is absolute, and that in his hands he holds the keys of life and death. Back in far-off ages they also knew of God, but, alas! that knowledge passed away; then as the thought of God receded, the Adversary actively usurped His place, so where there might have been life and light there is now the shadow of death and darkness. It may help us to understand how great are the issues involved in this conflict "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," if we dwell for a few moments upon what has prevailed in the past to give to these people their present religious belief.

It has been said that the three religions or beliefs in China agree to differ and even attempt to supplement one another's deficiencies. These are—Confucianism, the sect of the learned; Taoism, the sect of Rationalists, founded by Lâou-tsze (B.C. 604); and Buddhism, introduced into China about A.D. 66.

"Confucianism," says Professor Douglas, "represents pre-eminently the religion of China. It has its root in the worship of Shang-Ti, a deity which is associated with the earliest traditions of the Chinese race. Hwang-Te (2697 B.C.) erected a temple to his honour, and succeeding Emperors worshipped before his shrine. As time went on, the belief in a personal deity grew indistinct and dim, until when Confucius began his career there appeared nothing strange in his atheistic doctrines. He never in any way denied the existence of Shang-Ti, but he ignored him."

Lâou-tsze was a contemporary of Confucius, but now "All that is worthy of the name of religion in Taoism is in its original and wellnigh forgotten philosophy. . . . It rapidly degenerated into a system of superstition and extravagant spiritualism. . . . Then came Buddhism early in the Christian era . . . and Taoism, in order to keep pace with the ritual and solemn surroundings of this new faith, invented and inaugurated its own pantheon" (*Archdeacon Moule*).

It is with this pantheon that we are confronted. The *literati*, who are all Confucianists, may deny a belief in it, but few amongst them are not doing as others do in general idol-worship, especially at festivals, public and private, in times of danger, pestilence, drought, etc.; and which of them do not require the services of Taoist and Buddhist priests in the selecting of sites, lucky days, and much else? "Thus," as Smith says, in his *Chinese Characteristics*, "the same individual is at once a Confucianist, a Buddhist and a Taoist, and with no sense of incongruity. Buddhism swallowed Taoism, Taoism swallowed Confucianism, but at last the latter swallowed both Buddhism and Taoism together, and thus the three religions are one."

In the minds of Kien-Ning idolaters there are apparently three separate groupings, into which they divide their system of deities.

(1) National and ancestral objects of worship.

(2) Taoist Deities—(*a*) Spirit-heroes, who as men lived on earth ; (*b*) Devils and Goblins.

(3) Buddhist Deities. "Fuh" 佛 the usual name for Buddha, and "Pusa" 菩薩 — disciple — —one who earnestly follows Buddha—have come to be used as generic terms for all the idols worshipped here—significant as an illustration of how Chinese idolatry is leavened with Buddhism. A character combination of "Man and West Kingdom," in another writing of "Fuh," 僊 points back to Buddha himself

The *literati* like to speak of those under the first heading, worshipped without idolatry before the advent of the other two cults, and scornfully condemn what there has been of Taoist appropriation from amongst them. These bring one into a purer region of nature worship, perhaps because nearer the time when "that which may be known of God (was) manifest in them . . . being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 19, 20); for they include the worship of heaven and earth, celestial and terrestrial gods ; the sun, the moon, the south and north poles, respectively ruling life and death ; the Dragon King ; the Five Mountains and the Supreme Ruler of the sombre heavens ; as well as two gods of Literature, the Imperial tablet, Ancestral tablets and ancestors of the four past generations.

Within the walls of this city there are about one

hundred and fifty temples, and in most of them scores and scores of idols. We may say that "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone," but the statement is superficial, and less than the truth; for one enters a temple and sees it as a portrait gallery or a statuary hall, where almost every image—many life-size, monsters over twenty feet high, and great in proportion, with row upon row of little figures—represents some one who lived on earth once, who now lives elsewhere, able and ready as they think to help or hurt the thousands and thousands of human beings who, knowing no better, offer them homage.

The following Taoist Deities are exceedingly well known:—"The Pearly Emperor," "The God of Fire," "The God of War," "The God of Wealth," "The Lord of the Land," "The Five Grains Fairy," "The Kitchen Gods," "The Spirits of the Door," "The God of Musicians, Actors, Pugilists," "The God of Carpenters and Masons," "The God of Medicine, Apothecaries and Doctors," "The Goddess of Sailors or Queen of Heaven," "The Goddess of Women and Little Children," "The King of Hades, Judge of Spirits, etc.," "The Five Ruler Devils and their Attendants," "The Governor and Officers of Hades," "The Tall and Short Demons," "The Fox Devil," "The Small-pox and Measles Demon-goddess," etc., etc.

In Kien-Ning, and probably elsewhere, the majority of Buddhist devotees are women; but the few special idols of this cult demand attention from all:—"The Three Precious Buddhas—past, present and future," "Shakya-muni," "Amida-Buddha," "The Fat, Laughing Buddha," "The Goddess of Mercy and Giver of Children," "The Many-headed Buddha," "The Twenty-four Personages of the Heavens, wor-

shipped by Female Vegetarians," "The Four Gigantic Sentinels, Subduers of Demons," "The Eighteen Disciples," "The Wand-bearer," etc., etc.

Of all the above, who is he who stands for Satan? Amongst the national objects of worship his name looks simple enough—"The Five Mountains." Yes, he is a Taoist annexation. What was pure in nature is now put to a blasphemously evil use. The Five Mountains are in the east, west, south, north [1] and middle of China, in the Provinces of Shang-tung, Shen-si, Hu-nan, Shan-si and Ho-nan respectively, reverenced for ages past as great in nature, and as containing the deep of fountain springs. But China, having grown idolatrous, in the Mongol Dynasty (1280–1367 A.D.) an emperor ordered the presenting of offerings by sacrifice to Nga-Di, the spirit of these mountains; and since, with increasingly defined personality, in Kien-Ning at least, he is invested with a power that is absolute. His temple stands not a mile away from this city, and from it he rules over Kien-Ning's seven counties. It is superbly built on a beautifully wooded hill, a horrible thing in a setting of nature's loveliness. In order to reach the central hall, where he sits as a stupendous brazen idol, some thirty feet in height, it is necessary to pass through a vestibule, upon the walls of which are four large characters stating that he "Descended from on high." Then, up near the roofing over his head, before and beside him, are such sentences as these, startling in their blasphemy, inscribed upon great lacquered scrolls: "The Holy God's Temple," "The Highest in the Heavens," "Benevolent, Holy, Great God." It looks such an inhabited temple, for in all the halls and down side arcades there are literally hundreds

[1] "East, west, south, north."—Chinese order.

of figures, varying in size and position, and all are representations of men and devils in the nether regions. Separated from the main building, a smaller, darker part gives a ghostly conception of Hell, for Hell to the Chinese mind is a kind of yamen judgment hall, a prison full of torture chambers set somewhere in the under world. The entrance to this place is guarded by life-size men and horses, and farther on by jailors of horrid aspect, standing in double row, thus making a way to the torture chambers, where some of " Hell's Eighteen Punishments " are baldly depicted upon the walls, punishments which no one who persists in wickedness need hope to escape, for " Good and evil will surely meet with their own recompense." [1] The recompense awaiting evil-doers is an appalling prospect. They will be ground in stone mills, put under iron plough shares, tied to red-hot brass cylinders, flayed, boiled in an oil cauldron, pressed between spiked boards, have their tongues cut out, be forced to swallow a serpent and eat disgusting things, be cut open and thrown from a height on to a spiked mountain or into a pit full of poisonous serpents and reptiles, beaten with clubs, bitten by dogs, frozen with cold, roasted with heat, put into slime pits. Liars will have red-hot iron eggs forced into their mouths. Then as there is no possible annihilation of living matter, the victims come through these chastisements, to be re-born on earth, in a state, according to their deserts, ranging from the lowest to the highest forms of animal life, from insects and creeping things to birds and fish, domestic animals, great mountain beasts and horses, up, up the scale, until, once more they are re-born as man, when the process is repeated, which may eventually reach a heavenly culmination.

[1] A Chinese proverb in common use.

The Chinese Heaven's Hall is no correct Nirvana, but a place of bliss, where one may sit and do nothing for ever, feasting continually and living luxuriously, with money to spend in abundance.

On the twenty-seventh day of the third month, in the keeping of Nga-Di's birthday, this city seems wholly idolatrous. Through its length and breadth processions are held in his honour, in which the devils and demons of hell, in horrible image form, are fearfully in evidence. But it is sadder far to see poor human beings, fulfilling vows of servitude, taken in hours of stress, go clothed in yellow garments, with chains wound round their bodies.

Great as Nga-Di has become in the minds of the Kien-Ning people, it is not the many, but the few, who are burdened by the terror of his dealing with their destinies; it is the tens not the thousands who actively prepare their souls for descent to Hades. The present temple-keeper is a gentle, old, unlettered man, often the only living thing there, an insignificant figure, moving amongst a host of idols, in aspect, greater and fiercer than he. "Aged man," we lately asked, "how are you not afraid to live in this place alone?" and his answer came in calm decisiveness, "The future world I let it be; I am a doing-my-duty man; important sins I have not committed; god and the devil I do not fear." His god was "The Pearly Emperor"; his devil, the great Nga-Di.

But was he darker in understanding than his brothers and sisters in Christian lands, who knowing foundation facts, that "All have sinned" and that "The wages of sin is death," yet express in their lives that old man's words, "The future world I let it be . . .," ignoring their absolute need of salvation. Yet does any heathen conception of sin's retribution exceed in horror

that state of "outer darkness," that "weeping and gnashing of teeth," as described by the Son of God Who died, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

One wonders if our Message of deliverance, our News of the Redeemer, would appeal to the heathen with stronger force, if all their idol-spirits were harmful in their influence, if there was not the firm belief that some are indeed protectors.

At harvest time great processions are organized in honour of "Five Grains Fairy." His idol, with due ceremony, is brought from a mountain temple, about ten miles away, and carried in state to each of the yamens, where at the entrance gates, mandarins, to prove they are one with the people, offer it public obeisance. Then the procession, with mighty noise of clanging and clashing instruments, winds its way slowly through the streets, in their dreadful airless heat, till the Fairy's image may feel the scorching drought, the parching thirst of rainless weeks, and cause relief to come in the longed-for rain.

"And they called on the name of Baal . . . saying, O Baal, answer us; but there was no voice, nor any that answered."

Once, when the skies were as molten brass, and the city all noisy with processions, a party of visiting guests came in. As we received them, an old lady said, "Hear! All that excitement outside, trusting the idol's help. May there be rain to-night!" Then, turning towards the Bible-woman, she asked her in single directness, "You, are you also praying to your God, will He hear you and send the rain now?" Liong-Aing looked up at the heavens so hopelessly cloudless, and in true Chinese fashion avoided a simple "Yes" by answering almost proudly, "Our

God: the Maker of heaven and earth; who are we to command? According to His will, according to His time, the rain we want will certainly fall." Instead of "scolding heaven and earth," as Chinese expresses it, let us think of a time to come, when in climate as in all else the desire of living things will be satisfied. "And it shall come to pass in that Day . . . saith the Lord, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth" (Hos. ii. 21).

The hottest weeks of the summer are made hotter still in the streets by the same number of bonfires as there are heathen families to make them, for then they attend to the needs of their dead up to the fifth generation. Money is spent by the various households for the burning of paper houses, money and clothes, with scores of red paper boxes, filled with imaginary wealth, which, transmitted to Hades, become what in this world they are intended to represent.

Upon the last day of this function a fanciful touch of philanthropy comes into play, in a voluntary burning of similar gifts, for the poor in the land of Hades, who have no one on earth whose duty it is to give to them in their necessity. The amount supplied is largely increased by the fulfilment of vows, made during illness, in return for a granted recovery, to spend a specified sum on these burnings, which take place on the last day of the seventh month.

Numbers of paper load-bearers, gaily-dressed little men, accompany all that is burnt. This intercourse with the unseen world is horribly realistic. Think of a man remarking, as he stood in the flaring light of a spirit-charity burning, "To-night the streets will be full of devils, to-morrow they will be clean," his words implying that he believed the souls of the dead

would return on that night as so many paupers, seeking their paper-burnt doles. No doubt this support of the dead by the living gives one of the principal reasons why it is counted misfortune not to possess a son, either by birth or adoption, and why it is so extremely undesirable to outlive descendants or have none.

Guing Eng-Liong, the god of war, sits in nine temples in this city, one over each of its gates, guarding from foes, both seen and unseen. His picture hangs in many houses; incense is daily burnt before it by those who are kept, because of his presence, from a demon invasion. Kind old Tu Di-Gong, the lord of the land, has nothing to give to unlucky people, but much to those who are lucky. His portrait is also hung in their halls, and they know that the household pigs, the cocks and hens, will not roam away, for his watchful eye is upon them. He also cares for little children, keeping them well and happy, and ancient and honourable as he is, lets them amuse themselves with his idol, even to rolling it about on the floor, an unheard-of proceeding with others.

Then long, long ago, good "Five Grains Fairy," when living on earth as man, poisoned himself with deadly poison, in seeking to find among herbs what was fit for mankind to eat, and now it is he who secures fat harvests, and he who is honoured when famine is feared.

More famous still is spirit Tu-Cu, who occupies temples everywhere, and has special regard for the gentry. It is said he likes air to be sweet and fresh, so when incense is burnt before him he removes the harmful breath which may be causing illness. Then being himself a lord of the ground, should villagers seek him in pig-sacrifice, wild animals will not molest them.

The hard-working poor have a friend in the venerable, rich Deng-Nguing Go, who fasts so much that his heart is kind towards all who must labour to earn their living.

And who is not cheered by a sight of Mi-Le? the laughing, fat Buddha who, possessing no temple of his own, is invited to sit in the temples of others. Only in the first days of the year does his spirit visit China, and he makes them days of rejoicing, of feasting and resting for a nation wearied with twelve months' toil, but while he remains, past toil is forgotten; and happy fellow! he goes away, leaving behind him a smiling image.

Kwang-Yin, the goddess of mercy, may have originally been a god, but the Chinese dealing with her origin make her a Chinese woman. Young, good and beautiful, she was coerced by her father in the matter of marriage. It is said she passed through eighteen sorrows, and that since, in memory of them, no girl should marry at the age of eighteen. Notwithstanding her father's unkindness, she was deeply filial at heart, and when occasion offered, returned him good for evil. She is especially the goddess of mothers, but is also said to protect in sorrow, so is often addressed in prayer, "Great mercy, great pity, save from misery, save from evil; broad, great, efficacious, responsive Kwang-Yin."

The goddess of sailors, Ma-Cu, also called "Queen of Heaven," with her faithful attendants, "Thousand Mile Eye" and "Favouring Wind Ear," is ready for all emergencies, answering at once to cries of distress when addressed by an old age title, without even waiting to dress her hair, which she undoubtedly would not do, were she treated with less respect and called as a younger woman. Nor must her attendants

be forgotten, so on the bow of many a boat a great staring eye is painted, and "Favouring Wind Ear" is appealed to often, by encouraging little whistles, when sailors, feeling a rising breeze, plead for a helping wind. A few weeks ago, in the burning of mountain undergrowth, the Pearly Emperor's temple was in a danger zone. As soon as alarm was given, the general and soldiers, men and rabble, rushed immediately to the place, and with impromptu tree-branch flails, the flames, which were curling round the eaves, were thoroughly beaten down, and the words on the lips of all were these, "The Pearly Emperor god! what is not under his care? Were this temple by fire destroyed we should not know what to do." But no one wondered why this "Pearly Emperor," perhaps the highest god worshipped here, needed their protection. He is called the "Producer of all things," and was entrusted by "The Three Pure Ones" with the government of the world. Sun, moon and stars bow down before him, thunder and lightning serve him. He rules over life and death, over things above and things beneath—a Jupiter of China. Legends tell of a human origin, and in one of them it is said that when he reached his one thousandth birthday he was made god of heaven, but others deny a human beginning and say that he came from "Heavenly Lands."

There is perhaps sufficient in idol-worship to justify a common saying, "Trust heaven, trust idols to help"; but what of the host of demon spirits ever at hand to harm and hurt by disaster, sickness and death? And what of the powerful idol-spirits, spiteful, malicious, wicked and cruel, demanding utter subservience and constant propitiation? Of such is "Tuoi Bau-ie," who came from a wild-cat stock, good to those who treat him well, protecting them to the end; but woe

1. BIBLE WOMEN.
2. GUANG-SENG.
3 AND 4. EX-TEMPLE WOMEN WHO CAN NOW READ AND TEACH THE BIBLE.
5. THE GODDESS MACU'S TEMPLE AT NANGWA

to those who offend him, perhaps by neglecting his incense burning, not giving respect due from small to great, from grandchildren to a grandparent—towards these his hatred is directed, and it works for their undoing. He may set fire to a home, and wreak his revenge upon all who lived in it, until by death or dire disaster no two are living together.

And Co-Sen-Gie, the god of wealth, is terribly wicked and fierce, a horrid-looking creature, as presented in his picture. His right hand grasps a bag of money, his left hand holds a whip, and his feet stand on a ferocious tiger. Yet, in spite of what he is like, thousands seek his favour and wealth, and offer him their homage.

Why tell of more? These few may suffice to show in what manner of bondage Satan has bound this people; using silken chains of probable help and iron chains of fear, his system, a parody on foundation truths, leads to nothing more. There is not a word to tell of the God of love's redeeming love; not a word to tell of the "only Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." This is assuredly spirit warfare, long and hard, for spirit hosts have had time to assemble, to have their own way in earth's dark places, while we slept, but victory "by the blood of the Lamb is as sure as God is God. So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord."

Knowing their time is short, they hold desperately to the ground they have, and rage when they lose their prisoners. And as in Galilee long ago, they tremble with fear when confronted with Christ, in the lives and the words of His soldiers. "Let us alone. . . .," they cry, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God. I beseech Thee torment me not, before the time."

It is said that in the central rest-house of a village some men were intently listening to two of their fellow countrymen preaching the Gospel; towards the close of their exhortation they turned to the rest-house shrine, in which was the idol of Spirit Tu-Cu. "See this work of men's hands," they said, "this image you worship and serve. Can it speak, or hear or see? Can it answer to your call?" To this the men smiled as answer, and nodded in agreement. When the preachers had gone on their way, they still sat on, and discussed, not only the words they had heard, but also the idol before them. Then one of their number stood and, pointing towards the shrine, declaimed in satirical scorn, to the amusement of his companions, "Yes, you are made of wood: your mouth, is it able to speak; your ears to hear from afar; your eyes, are they good for seeing; were you by wind blown down, how long would you lie where you fell?" The words were yet on his lips when suddenly, smitten with terrible pains, they rolled on the ground in agony, calling on "heaven and earth" to save them. They crawled to the idol's feet and craved his pardon for having despised him by laughter and words. Later, the Tu-Cu spirit entered into a man and spoke through him with authority.

"Those strangers serve the true God, the God Whom I greatly fear; over those who belong to Him I have no power at all. For me they have no respect; they count me a lifeless thing, only remembering my image, forgetting that I am spirit; and so when they call me deaf and dumb, blind and unable to move, I accept what they say in silence. But *you* who serve me, *you* whom I help to protect, to shame and reproach me before them, to revile me amongst yourselves! For this my wrath is towards you, and chastisement was due."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LORD'S DAY IN KIEN-NING CITY.

"And at evening let me say,
I have walked with God to-day."

IN the last chapter the heathen have been described as (1) bound to a hopeless religious system without apparent sense of spiritual danger, where as Whitefield says, "The alarm is that there is no alarm, the horror is that there is no horror." And (2) bound by God-given consciences to prepare for the future without any assurance of hope that the merit-reward they seek will ever be really found. "They cry for help, but none giveth answer."

Most of our brightest Christians have come from this second class. They were awake enough to hear of deliverance as "Good News," and needed no telling and telling again. Leaving the gloom which depressed us as we thought of the heathen world, let us take relief in the brightness of Sunday here, our pre-eminently Christian day.

In the stillness of early morning the City Church bell rings and is heard almost from wall to wall of a town wherein is no traffic and nothing to deaden the sound. Most people wear pliable cloth-soled shoes, and there are no wheels save those of wheelbarrows from Kiang-si, which creak and screech over Kien-

Ning's cobble stones. So the bell announces unchallenged to all who hear it, that "This is the Christian's Worship day"; while we, as we listen, give thanks for its witness.

No relentless "get up" bell is rung in this Compound on Sunday mornings, an omission pleasing to every one in the sense of freedom and ease it brings. Who does not welcome "Worship day," or "Peace, Rest day" as it is called? The morning demands a wearing of freshly washed coats, not yet advanced to that patching stage, when the garment itself retreats behind patches of varying hue, always carefully stitched upon the outside; hair that shines to glossiness may be further adorned with a bow of bright ribbon, or a real little flower. When all are ready we meet together for a hymn and prayer, and no hymn is more often sung at this time than "O bless the Lord, my soul," for the sake of the sentiment in its first line, "My heart indeed is glad."

The distance from here to the City Church is, for women and children, a walk of some twenty minutes. We start at the right time as we know it, and yet it does not follow that our right time will prove the same as that which the preacher keeps, for our clocks and watches are not good enough to work always in unison. Their systems are no doubt affected by the climate, for even the very best behaved, guaranteed at home never to lose a minute, need from time to time in this land a good sun-dial correction, but alas, when sun-dials disagree! The difference, however, is seldom serious, only a matter of minutes. Our arrival is greeted by a hum of Sunday School learning, from a hall by the door. The first class for men is learning about the Doctrine; the second is a Bible class for Christian men, attended by young and old. The

women meanwhile, and the girls of our Boarding School, looking fresh and nice, whether in summer white or in winter blue uniform coats, collect in the Church. On a hot summer morning every one uses a fan, from the preacher himself to the smallest child. On a cold winter's day, in the freezing air, as we breathe we look like many smoking chimneys. The boys of the Boarding School are all drawn up in front like cadets; the girls stand in a long line down the side. God give us to see trained soldiers go forth from each of these schools in the coming years to wage war on the enemy's ground! Amongst the men and women there are a few who stand as leaders, always on active service; others less aggressive, squarely face the foe and witness a good confession; others again, set free from idolatry but still encumbered with worldly things, do not seek first the Kingdom of God in the daily round of their lives. Yet even these are changed indeed since bygone heathen days. The Church-uncle, for instance, who upwards of twenty years ago was "Head of the thieves" in his part of the city, is now the head of a Christian household; excitable Chuoi, who has long been a Christian, and yet still of the firebrand type, is sometimes engaged in the broils he at one time seemed to enjoy; yet, who loves his Church more truly than he, and who so ready to uphold his doctrine, to preach in and out of season, while owning himself an unworthy disciple? Then how many there are who have gambled hard in past days and a few eaten opium as well, who now, by the grace of God, have nothing to do with either. Until his conversion about twelve years ago, Siu-Guang was known far and near as a sorcerer and fortune-teller, but is now catechist

of our Kiang-Si Church, devoted to earnest soul-winning work amongst the poor. He has no equal for genuine humility, persuasiveness and power. Perhaps in this whole Church there is no other man who has obtained so complete a release from Satan's binding chains; no other who wages a stronger warfare in the very darkest places and wins trophies for his Lord by much prayer-striving.

From our hearts we give thanks for all Church-workers, those brought up in Christian schools and the many we owe to Ku-Tien and Foo-Chow; but our Kien-Ning Church is weak until it can give more Spirit-filled Kien-Ning men and women as evangelists to each of its seven counties—a matter for constant prayer.

From this all too slight a review of the congregation we now return to the service. To us, who love our Liturgy, its rendering in Chinese seems to lose in appealing power, and yet the translation as it stands scarcely leaves room for improvement, and in time will become to the Chinese Church what in English it is to us. We are enjoined by the rubric to "Say the Lord's Prayer with a loud voice." None desire to murmur gently, so all the responses to the sentences are given in full-voiced chorus. For the Apostle's Creed it sometimes happens that every one has to wait, while one of the congregation, unable to follow as quickly as others, determinedly and alone, recites to the very end. Then all are in the choir, so all sing, and where we fail in tunefulness we amply atone for in sound. Sometimes the organist leads,[1] but, as often as not is led. A row of small boys in front take special delight in Easter hymns, the lines

[1] On a good American organ.

and verses of which can end in an "Al-le-lu-ia." Others may sing the hymn, but they, with great effort, prepare for that, and give it with satisfaction. There was a time when Sunday by Sunday we sang the three Canticles to three settled chants, but now we not only change the chants monthly but have in their turns the *Benedictus* and *Benedicite*; the last, with its praise clause sung thirty-two times, meets the approval of young and old. There may be advance in this, but nevertheless in our Chinese Church, and for some years to come, we shall all of us sing every tune, whether we know it or not, and add slurs and turns at will to the tunes we know and love best. As our pastor is often away on Sundays at one of his district Churches, Dr. Nguoi Ngiong-gi, schoolmaster Liu and several others willingly preach in turn, no doubt to the blessing of each. Only a thoroughly well-prepared and well-delivered sermon can stand the sleep test which assails it on very hot summer mornings. Should one or two in the congregation be overcome with sleep, they hear a resounding word from the pulpit recalling lost attention: "Brothers, this is not sleeping time. I request you to awake and listen." But some, more especially on the women's side, feeling the drowsiness coming on and really wanting to lose it, stand up with a jerk and then fan with vigour. Once when Guang-Seng had repeated this process a couple of times, with but little success, she became quite annoyed, and announced in audible tones of exasperation, "Stand up! Sit down indeed! What is the use in that; let some one here draw one of my teeth, for nothing less will awaken me now."

Sometimes a telling illustration, in graphic picture words, is sufficient to make all shake off their tendency to sleep. The following on an oppressive morning had certainly good effect:—

Having asked for a generous giving to the Diocesan Fund of the Chinese Church in the Province of Shen-Si, the speaker invited us all to stand at the edge of a pond, while from its depths a fish was caught, one to be counted as our own, to keep and supply with sustenance, until it grew large and fat. "So we laid that fish of our own on the bank and sat down in satisfied contemplation, but the fish demanded attention. It opened its mouth and panted, and the panting said, 'Water, water!' It gasped and wriggled and sprang from the ground, and each spring shouted for 'Water.' Then the panting and gasping and wriggling grew less, and it lay with its mouth wide open, waiting and waiting for water. Alas, for our very own fish, must it die while lying there? Yes, the fish is our Shen-Si diocese, and the water it wants is money. Brothers and sisters, pity our fish and send it out swimming in water."

Although the ordering of the service is regular and correct, its orderliness is relieved at times by such humorous little happenings as could only take place here. Siu-Guang was chosen to preach on Ash Wednesday, with an interpreter, for translating his Kiang-Si speech into the Kien-Ning dialect. At first he led in all earnestness, scarcely giving his interpreter time to do more than repeat at long intervals the last words of a sentence; but soon the interpreter in turn asserted himself demanding undue attention, until the original preacher's few words were enlarged on at will and at length by the other. Then from the body of the Church a man deliberately walked up the aisle and squarely faced the two, and with fine Chinese gesture addressed the interpreter, "Brother, I too have a word to say. One preacher is sufficient. Where is an end with two?" Whereupon

he returned to his seat, and we, while condemning its irregularity, were grateful for its effect.

This City Church in the afternoon is filled with a lively set of heathen lads from houses around, attracted to Sunday School by seeing the boys of our Boarding School singing lustily as they march under their banner; they are also attracted by the hope of being given a "Flowery card." With divers original plans for keeping hold of weather-cock minds, the school head-teacher leads and arranges small classes all over the Church to be taught by his own young pupils. We shall hear one day how boy learnt from boy, and who knows when texts on "Flowery cards" may bring a message of hope to hearts in heathen homes.

Sunday afternoon is a valuable time to the work all round. In both the men's and the women's hospitals services are held for heathen patients, and Sin-Guang has another in his "Worship hall" for Kiang-Si-speaking men. A band of volunteers from amongst the Christian men go out to preach in the streets, or in one of the outside villages; and the Girls' Boarding School holds a Sunday School, with classes of juniors taught by elders, promising many a well-trained teacher to the Kien-Ning Church, who will know how to organize Sunday School work in her home and village. This Compound, being the centre of Christian women's work, is on Sunday afternoons, a very delightful place. The first to arrive are the Sunday School children. Christian and heathen little girls, as well as a few small boys, rush like a whirlwind to the drill-hall and wait with less patience than noise until the hour arrives and their leader appears and marshals them all into marching order. A festive line they make, for in it each teacher upholds her red flag, and is followed by her own "disciples." A blind

girl plays the harmonium, marking her time right well, for they sing as they march, and the hymn that suits best is "Onward, Christian soldiers." From this they divide to their several classes, and of seven teachers now required five are our elder blind girls. They steadily teach for some twenty minutes,[1] and then how pleased and proud they are as the leader's questions are answered by their classes as she gives them the heart of the lesson in her own little closing talk!

The women's Church service is held at the same time as the children's Sunday School. This is conducted by women, and in their simple and reverent rendering of it our evening services loses nothing of beauty and helpful uplifting to those who follow it word by word. Women chosen for the office count it a high privilege, very conscious of honour placed upon them. When Mrs. Cing, once a bead-telling temple women, was appointed to read the Lesson, her acceptance was simply, "Thank God," but before she came forward on Sunday a quickened conscience led her to offer a costly apology to one to whom it was due, "for lips that read the Bible in Church may not keep unkind words on them." After the offertory has been collected by four of the younger women, we sing a concluding hymn and then divide into teaching classes. The heathen visitors who came to "see worship," satisfied now to have seen it, are willing to leave the Church and follow their special teacher to be told Whom we worship. "Beginners," those deciding for Christianity, are taken to a room by themselves and taught what will help them most. The old, unlettered ladies like to go with these. Then, when the Church

[1] The International uniform Sunday School Lesson.

is quiet again, the Christian women are given their own Bible address. This they most truly appreciate; not being a regular sermon, they are ready to answer questions, ready to give examples from their daily lives which bear at the moment upon the thought which is being impressed, and they are also ready to give themselves as illustrations if called upon to do so. Once one of the younger mothers, lovingly holding her babe in her arms, stood out in the central aisle and, Madonna-like, stood there in the gentle evening light, and every one said together, "His left hand is under my head, His right hand doth embrace me" (Song of Solomon ii. 6). And which of us did not go on her way strong with comfort in the thought in times of most helpless weakness, "The eternal God is (a) refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27).

Here and in many another centre our Sunday closes in praise, for old and young meet together for what the Chinese like full well—a round of hearty singing. Many have hymns to choose and many have verses to say, so "Ameng" to each hymn is followed at once by a chorus of hymn-numbers. (These people seem to know no hymn without also knowing its number.) The one selected has to belong to the best heard voice. Once in the month, with hymns at each end, the Church Catechism is repeated; and is its recital enjoyed elsewhere as enjoyed by the family here? The woman to whom it falls to announce her duty to her neighbour is counted fortunate by the rest. With one long taking of breath she is off. It is not possible now to restrain her with "Slowly, more slowly, gently"; it has to be *accelerando, presto and prestissimo*, until with a satisfied pant, the word-rush is over.

This Church is blessed in owning an excellent

hymnology,[1] containing over four hundred hymns, all the best known and loved. The translation of nearly all leaves little to be desired. No "Greenland's icy mountains" refreshes us here on hot days; we sing instead to the good old tune—

> "Mongolia, China (to) Annam,
> Japan, India, all lands.
> Men's hearts within not peaceful
> Truth greatly, greatly lacks."

Hearts in the East and West have beautiful union in these hymns, and indeed there is something comfortful in the praise service, which closes our Chinese Sunday, when we sing "Abide with me," "Sun of my soul," and others equally loved, remembering the home evening services, most dear to us all.

How uplifting to think of this world-wide singing of pure praise and thanksgiving, blending together in its ascending to the Lord of those who sing. Yes, "The Lord's Name is praised, from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same" (Psalm cxiii. 3, P.B.V.). Not yet as it should be, not as it will be, when, in ineffable glory—

> "From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast
> Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
> Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost,—
> Alleluia! Alleluia!"

And now as the plan of this little book holds it within one city's walls, I am more than grateful to Miss Phillips, on the behalf of those who will read it, for writing so happily in the following chapter of other cities and other centres, visited in a recent tour, through our beautiful counties.

[1] The *Union Chinese Hymnal.* Compiled by representatives in Foo-Chow of the American Board, the Anglican, and the Methodist Episcopal Missions.

CHAPTER XIX.

FROM CHURCH TO CHURCH.

"There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."—*Josh.* xiii. 1.

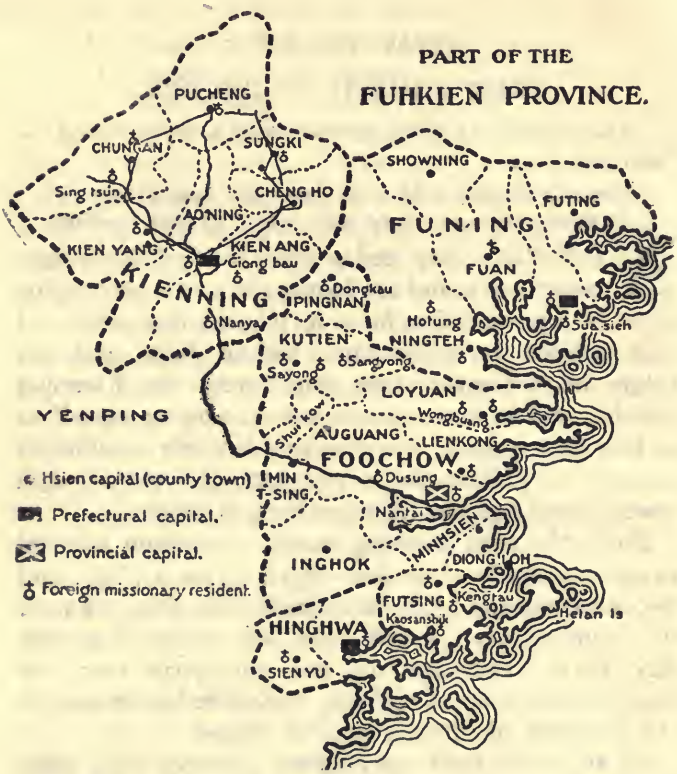
"Now Christians, hold your own—the land before ye
Is open—win your way, and take your rest."—*Keble.*

A POURING day and a good many load-baskets scattered about are hardly the most encouraging sight as a preparation for a fortnight's itineration. I had decided to accompany Bishop Price and my father on a Confirmation tour round the Kienning district, and in consequence was exercising myself as to how best to pack into four load-baskets a sufficient amount of clothes for every sort of weather, and enough food supplies for three hungry people.

Early the next morning much commotion ushered in our cavalcade of coolies—three for each chair and two loadmen, and after surprisingly little delay we were off, comfortably packed into our chairs; as the day dawned comparatively fine our spirits rose: we gave ourselves up to enjoying the scene before us and the prospect of all that was to follow.

At 10.30 the next morning we gathered with some forty of the native Christians to see six men and women confirmed; it was a quiet beautiful little service, which one felt they fully understood, and another little band of remembrancers was added to the Church.

Alas! when not far on our way, down came the rain, but as the road was pretty flat, we were able to


PART OF THE
FUHKIEN PROVINCE.
PUCHENG
CHUNGAN
SUNGKI
Sing tsun
CHENG HO
AONING
KIEN YANG
KIEN ANG
Ciong bau
KIENNING
Dongkau
PINGNAN
Nanya
KUTIEN
Sayong
Sangyong
YENPING
SHOWNING
FUTING
FUNING
FUAN
Hotung
NINGTEH
Sua sieh
LOYUAN
Wongbuang
Shui kow
AUGUANG
LIENKONG
FOOCHOW
Dusung
MIN SING
Nantai
MINHSIEN
DIONG LOH
INGHOK
FUTSING
Kengtau
Kaosanshik
Helan Is
HINGHWA
SIENYU
Hsien capital (county town)
Prefectural capital.
Provincial capital.
Foreign missionary resident.

keep to our chairs and so kept fairly dry. It is remarkable how dry the chair-bearers themselves manage to keep under their big bamboo hats, some three feet in diameter ; but rain does not improve their tempers, and by the time we got to Ciong-Ke, a small recently opened station with a catechist in charge, they were quarrelling among themselves and barely on speaking terms with us. Just within the village a burst of crackers greeted us, and we knew that the few beginners there were bidding us a hearty welcome.

The primitive little Church has mud floors and walls, but the floor was cleanly swept and the walls well hung with scriptural pictures and texts in large and distinct characters. Crowds of curious excited people presently pressed their way in. The catechist, with a smile, brought us hot and very sweet milk; surely this was the correct thing to give the foreigner! We sipped it, sitting in state at the top of the room, under the gaze of some sixty pairs of eyes.

Our cook, called Napoleon by the Bishop owing to his marked ability of marshalling and keeping in order our somewhat refractory coolies, meanwhile prepared dinner, and we settled down to it, surrounded on all sides by an eager crowd, anxious to miss none of the extraordinary doings of these most extraordinary foreigners. "Are all those things silver? Ah! but these foreigners have money! What are they eating? No rice! How can they eat full on that little scrap? How clean! How clean!" Father helps them out a little, correcting "silver" to "aluminium" and "wine" to "tea." "Ah! ah! but this teacher speaks our words well! He has been here very many years. True, we must eat and so must you, but it is all very good to look at, very amusing." An hour later there are more crackers and exhortations to

"Slowly, slowly go," and we are again on our way, and another four hours in the wet bring us to Yellow Earth Village. Two years ago I remember my arrival at the little Church here, with insufficient accommodation in every way. What a surprise it was to go into a lovely big hall, amidst showers of crackers and to be told proudly by the catechist that it was the new worship room! Pastor Bau, ordained at the recent Foo-Chow Synod, was there to receive us, and soon the little congregation began to arrive. By 5.30 o'clock all was ready for service. Three men came forward to renew their baptismal vows, and the Bishop, interpreted by Pastor Bau, spoke to them of the Father's blessing conveyed to them by the laying on of hands, and of the right preparation of heart before approaching the Lord's Table.

Next came the unpacking of baskets, and before long our wadded quilts and rugs were out and we were in bed, thankful for a night in clean surroundings.

At 5 a.m. the next morning a loud clap of thunder woke us, but we could not wait for the rain, so amid crackers off we were again, our loads made somewhat heavier by a substantial present of eggs from the Bible-woman.

A stormy sky greeted us, but it was shortly to prove an excellent setting for the great masses of weird-shaped rocks away to our left. Thickly wooded at the foot, they rose up almost sheer to a summit of 400 feet, and frowned down upon us in the most forbidding way. Just a glimpse of three or four of the famous Bohea rocks, first under a cloudy sky, and then within an hour out came the sun, and what a contrast! What lights and shades! Their harsh sides looked almost friendly, and we rejoiced that the road was free from the usual cobbles, so that we might give our eyes

to taking in the beauty around us. Our chair-bearers had quite recovered themselves, and were even disposed on the strength of empty chairs—for we were walking—to compare the foreigner and the Chinaman to our advantage!

We had dinner in an ordinary native inn; mud floor, walls begrimed with smoke, a square table and assorted collection of chairs, a whole family of chickens, not to mention a couple of pigs. Mrs. Innkeeper, busily engaged in preparing rice at the far end, gave us a friendly nod and seemed happily quite indifferent to the rapidly increasing crowd, who have come to "look at the play." A foreigner seems to suggest exactly the same thing to every Chinese, for the same questions as those of the previous day came with unvaried monotony, and they watched till the last spoon had been packed up and then sauntered slowly back to their work.

We arrived at Chung-An by six o'clock and were met some miles out by two or three "Church-uncles," and a little way farther on by the day-school children, all arrayed in their very best clothes, making such a pretty picture as they bowed in their quaint polite way.

This is a very progressive station, and a new Church has recently been built to hold some 400 worshippers, and the old Church turned into an admirable day-school, where forty-three children are being taught by a young literary man baptized last year.

The Sunday morning congregation consisted of about 150, fifty of whom were children belonging to the Sunday School, but all were remarkably quiet, as first seven women, followed by the same number of men, stood up and quietly and distinctly made their solemn promise. The afternoon Sunday School was interesting, and the children seemed to enjoy it

thoroughly. Evening worship was held in the guest room of the ladies' house, and consisted of hearty singing, followed by text-reading on a subject given the week before, so that each might have good time to find a suitable verse.

Three nights in a foreign house are wonderfully refreshing, and we started off the next morning in high spirits. It was a lovely morning, and everything looked so fresh and full of life as we ascended the hills at the back of the city. How beautifully it is situated! The quaint Chinese roofs, the irregular wall, the river on three sides, sparkling in the sunshine; then the fields, stretched away for miles round, green with young corn, and farther in the distance the Bohea hills standing out in sharp relief against the sky. We were loath to leave it, but nature had painted a very studio of pictures for us all along that road, each more beautiful than the last, but none comparing with what was yet to follow.

Beauty and ugliness live very close together, and even the most optimistic could not have found anything to appreciate in our destination for that night. It was dirty, smelly, dark and noisy. Imagine a large box $7 \times 5 \times 7$ feet plentifully hung with soot and without a single window, then furnish it with a couple of trestles covered with a few boards, add one chair, and you have some idea of my bedroom. I was loath to go to bed and more so to unpack my belongings. A large sheet of oil-paper, however, gave me a little confidence, and with some skill, as I thought, I managed to make my bed and complete my toilet, without allowing anything to come into contact with either floor or walls, but half-past five the next morning, found me as ready to get up as I had been loath to go to bed the previous evening. The rats had been talka-

tive and other creatures rather too familiar, and I thought with joy of fresh air and sunshine.

We got off quietly enough, and had soon forgotten there was such a thing as a Chinese inn. How could we think of man, when the unspoiled work of the Master Creator was before us in all its beauty! Even that little village of last night's horrors actually adds to the beauty of the scene before us, and, on beyond, the mountains rise tier after tier, till they lose themselves in a purple haze against the sky. But at nightfall we were again confronted with dirt and sin and misery, and we realized most keenly the power of God to raise man to the highest levels and the power of Satan to drag him down into the very depths.

In pouring rain next morning we arrived at Pu-Cheng. The spring of last year Miss Church had gone up from Ku-Cheng to join Miss Bryer and Miss Armstrong to open the new girls' school, which was then only just completed. A Church and women's school, in memory of Miss Rodd, were in construction, so there was much to see and everything told of growth in the work.

The seventeen little girls in the school were wildly excited to see a Bishop! What was he like? I think they expected something very extraordinary! Their curiosity was soon satisfied, for in the afternoon they drilled and recited English poems and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The next morning, at 10 a.m., another little band of nine were confirmed before a congregation of some seventy men and women, and we all joined in prayer that they might be kept faithful to their lives' end.

We were accompanied to the city gate by some of the Christians, amidst a great burst of crackers and explosion of small bombs, guaranteed to keep one very

much alive. The inevitable crackers greeted us everywhere, and our coolies became thoroughly annoyed, for the Christians seemed to think it greatly added to the warmth of our reception if the explosions took place as close to our chairs as possible. At the next halt the most interesting feature was a very flourishing day-school, where a young schoolmaster, single-handed, keeps four forms, each containing six pupils very much up to the mark.

The few Christians soon assembled and another quiet little service was held, when six more, strengthened and upheld by their fellows, made their vows.

My room that night consisted of the catechist's reception room, and the Bishop and father had to sleep in the Church, so it was late before we began to think of settling in. Two o'clock the next morning came all too quickly, but we had a long day before us and it was necessary to start early. Some ten miles farther on, crackers again loudly announced that we were approaching Suing-Du, the last little outstation in the Pu-Cheng district. Here a halt of two hours was made, while some thirteen candidates were examined by Pastor Li. While this was going on, father had a stormy scene with the landlord of the Church; he, poor misguided man, had thought by letting his house to Christians to obtain help in his gambling troubles, and on finding out his mistake was bent on turning us out. The house was convenient, the Church roomy, and he knew it, but if we were not going to help him, neither was he us, so a new place will have to be found.

A beautiful little mountain stream added greatly to the beauty of the scene, and now and again a few houses crowded together broke upon our view. Up and up we climbed for an hour and a half, stopping and yet

stopping again to admire the scene around us. We hailed the sight of the little rest-house at the top with some joy, but on arriving there our exhaustion was completely forgotten, for the scene before us was indescribably lovely. Our next road was over a hill, and as we looked back to Pu-Cheng we saw the mountain pathway we had already climbed, traced for us right down into the valley by a sparkling little stream, broadening and gathering in force, till it rushed into the river ; in front a steep flight of steps led to a narrow red earth path, cut in the side of the mountain, which wound in and out down to the Sung-Ki valley. All around were thousands upon thousands of graceful bamboos.

At Sung-Ki we were met just within the city gates by a small band of Sunday School children, and farther on by the catechist and schoolmaster, who all gave us a warm welcome ; at the mission house Miss Coleston and Miss Stinson gave us a further welcome. It certainly was nice to be back in Christian surroundings, and a hot bath put us on very much better terms with ourselves and everything else.

That evening Pastor Li held a most impressive baptismal service in the guest room of the Women's School. I have seldom experienced such absolute quietness in a Chinese gathering as he spoke of the Holy Spirit's power to lead them on to complete and lasting victory.

A wet Sunday meant some little difficulty in getting the eleven women candidates to Church, especially as among their number one was blind, one was stone-deaf, and another an almost helpless cripple ; the last, a pathetic little figure, came up the Church under the gentle guidance of Kong-Geng, the Bible-woman, but when her turn came to answer it seemed as if special

spiritual power and courage had been given to make up for the bodily weakness. Her voice rang through the Church, "I promise and confess it all."

It was of necessity rather a noisy service, for this Church, otherwise so suitable, is built right on to the street; but we always comfort ourselves with the fact, that what worries us so much, is hardly noticed by the Chinese. About forty, counting the fourteen of the morning, came together for the Holy Communion, and it was, I am sure, a time of real communion to all.

After supper on Sunday evening all the Christians are invited to gather in the Women's School for hymn-singing, an institution which is greatly appreciated and which seems to link all together, for they know that many in other stations are joining in their hymn of praise.

Ching-Ho was the next station on our itinerary, and four o'clock the next day found us crossing a covered bridge, swarming with people, all intent on driving the closest possible bargain, by the method that he who shouts loudest will win in the end, and extraordinarily true it seemed to prove. The crowd seemed to find us even more interesting than marketing, for we arrived at the Church with some hundreds at our heels and were allowed just enough room to sit down and partake of the tea and cakes provided, without being given an extra square inch for breathing space. Miss Boaz, who frequently stays in this place for some months together, has three very nice clean little rooms in a top storey above the catechist's quarters, and it really was a relief to go up there away from the crowds for a short time before the service.

Father was lost in admiration at the way the buildings had been planned, for last time he was here it seemed as if nothing could be made of the site; now

a substantial Church, built to hold some 300, was standing there, another tribute to Dr. Nguoi's architectural abilities and also to the careful oversight of Miss Boaz herself.

At the evening service one woman entered the catechuminate, four men were baptized, and four men and two women confirmed.

At Dong-Dong-Chi the familiar greeting " Peace, peace," accompanied by crackers, gave us anything but peaceful sensations, but told of our arrival at the Church, and we were soon surrounded by the usual curious, but friendly, crowd. It was nice to see a woman who had read the previous year at the Kien-Ning Women's School, and to find how warmly she remembered everybody, though I am afraid as a Christian she is not very " hot-hearted."

The Church was packed for the evening, but the heathen, who crowded in, seemed extraordinarily controlled by the solemnity of the service, for there was hardly a sound from start to finish.

We felt specially moved to pray that night, that this last little band, with all those previously confirmed, might be drawn into closer and closer communion with each other and with the Lord to Whom they had consecrated their lives.

The river runs down from Dong-Dong-Chi to Kien-Ning city, and as the Bishop had to get back as quickly as possible, we forsook our chairs for two tiny boats. It took a very short time to transfer ourselves and our belongings to the floor of our respective boats, and for the first few hours the change from an up and down jog to a sideways motion was quite enjoyable.

These tiny boats can be fairly comfortable if one is content to settle in a humble position and stay there. Stand up and you bump your head, move about and

the boat moves with you, and "Napoleon" nearly sunk us two or three times in his violent efforts to be useful. Making the bed at night is rather a trial, as it takes up all the available space, and the continuous struggle to get out of one's own way is not the best tonic for the temper!

How we welcomed the first sight of Kien-Ning city, and how we appreciated home that night, though to the Bishop it was only a temporary halt in preparation for a further three days' journey back to Foo-Chow.

Two hundred miles in seventeen days and almost continuous travelling can hardly be called speedy, but it leaves our minds stored with many a scene of beauty and interest to be brought out and enjoyed in the days to come, "Memories of days that were and therefore are for ever."

[Miss Phillips, the author of this chapter, was married in August, 1917, to the Rev. M. O. M. Duke, of the C.M.S., Japan.]

CHAPTER XX.

"PURE BRIGHTNESS" IN THE SPRING.

"The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come."—*Song of Solomon* ii. 12.

THE foregoing chapters were begun and were to have ended as midsummer night recreation; but, like the hours on our good Cheng-Mi's clock, when a season has once arrived it quickly goes on to the next. So autumn and winter have passed since then, and now we are in spring's wonderland, where flowers in a luxuriant wildness grow lavishly everywhere. Winter swept over us roughly; his frosted breath on nature's garden seared its green to wilderness brown. And the delicate plants, maiden-hair ferns and orchids, unable to combat the blast, scarcely came through it alive.

When the cold was at its worst, the Master Gardener came one day and transplanted two little tender plants into the paradise garden. Our spiritful, cheery, blind Uong-Aing, the child of the rippling laugh, grew quiet, more quiet, tired, more tired, until, in a week of dreadful cold, her brave little struggle ceased. Then at last she could say in rapturous truth, "With me there is nothing wrong, nothing the matter at all." Then, too, the dear blind baby, "Cry-Cry," who had learnt long since to laugh—our happy blind baby girl, fell suddenly ill with cold. For less than an hour she panted and laboured to breathe, but weakened by past neglect, too wearied for further effort, she fluttered,

quivered, sighed and was still. Thus and together, two more from here entered the gate of the heaven-garden blessed and homed for ever.

Just now the people are keeping their festival called "Clear Brightness," which always comes at the beginning of April, close to our Eastertide. Then, when nature arises all throbbing with newness of life, the heathen perform the rite of worshipping at the tombs. As the Chinese never bury within a city wall, all the men of a household go out on the festival days to the family graves, on the sides of near hills, or down on surrounding plains, where [1] "Having weeded and swept the tombs, they light incense and arrange in front of the grave sacrificial offerings consisting of boiled pork, fish, poultry, cakes, tea and wine. The family representative then performs the *kow-tow* in honour of the deceased, and each in turn follows his example. Crackers are then fired and paper-money burnt, on the ashes of which is poured a libation of wine. A second time the *kow-tow* is performed, and this brings to a close the ancestral worship, which is a mixture of homage and prayer. It is the universal belief that the spirits of ancestors watch over and protect their descendants during life, and that they pass backwards and forwards between their resting-places in the graves and the dwellings of their representatives. It is obviously important, therefore, that there should be no let or hindrance to their power of ingress and egress to and from the tombs, and the first object of the visitors to the graves is to clear away all and every obstruction which may have accumulated during the preceding twelve months. The *kow-tow* and sacrificial offerings satisfy the prevailing idea of homage and prayer, and by their due

[1] Professor Douglas, *China*.

observance are supposed to secure the protection and support of the dead."

There is one and only one grave within the walls of Kien-Ning city. It is built on the grounds of a former yamen, whereof there are now few ruins remaining, so thoroughly was it destroyed by fire in the summer of 1905. Lately the gentry of the city have bought these grounds for five hundred dollars, and intend to have thereon a beautiful public park; and last week all heathen school students, in keeping an "Arbor day," went out in a body and on the site each one planted a tree.

The site is exceedingly good, on terraced land, and the coming magnificent gardens will have, on their highest part, a grave in memory of a woman who, nearly one thousand years ago, saved her city from threatening destruction. She comes before us about 944, as the widowed wife of a royal tutor and Prefect of Kan-Chow, returning to this city to live in her own old home. King Uang Ing-ceng then ruled in Kien-Ning, and to the royal court her family had free access. Danger threatened the Kien-Ning king, and soon it was known that troops, from the next province, Kiang-Si, were marching against the city. But leading the hostile army were General Bing and General Uang, who had once been in her husband's service and had upon some occasion been deeply indebted to her, yet who were now marching against the city where she and her people lived. How they met her we do not know, but gratitude conquered, for history simply relates that "On the day the city was entered, because of a word from her, the work of destruction immediately ceased." And Chinese women to-day can dream of the good old days when there was power in woman's word!

The account concludes with these words, " A grateful Kien-Ning people called her their Lady Ling, the bulwark of the whole city." Her descendants were very numerous and famous as officials, and the family is now widely scattered over all the country. An honourable woman's grave is in the city she saved, and her memory is not forgotten. Many versions of this story prevail in Kien-Ning, and amongst them one in common belief shows her as going out in person to interview the soldiers drawn up outside the city walls. They, also grateful for past kindness, listened to her proposals presented in fine spirit. And when she left them they had agreed to pass over every house belonging to friends of her own, if, as a sign at the door of each, a willow branch should be hung. When the army entered the city gates, bent on destructive measures, lo and behold! at all the house doors a branch of willow was fastened, and the soldiers, true to their word, molested no single house; for were there not friends of this large-hearted woman living in every one?

Now at this festival time, she is specially remembered, when, according to custom here and elsewhere, a willow, or other green branch, is hung over every door.

Connected with willow trees there are various superstitions constantly in evidence. One sees them growing in drooping grace, and wonders why from among the trees they are credited with a power both for good and bad luck, for warding off demon influence, as well as for dealing in it. Spiritualist mediums always use images carved out of willow-wood in their spirit-communications.

This festival of " Pure Brightness," coming at Eastertide, brings to the Christians uplifting thoughts

of resurrection life, and to us the words " Pure Brightness," connected with spring and growing things, show us this Church as now in springtime promising increase and fullness of life. " Chosen to show forth the praises of Him Who hath called them into His marvellous light.'"

Jeremy Taylor, in a recorded prayer, calls his serving of God " deliciousness of employment," and cannot his words be fittingly used to describe our service here ?

The pages of this little book show that the Lord of our Holy Catholic Church *must* have His Chinese members, not only for what they contribute to it, not only for its completion, but that He in them may be glorified, that they may bring glory to Him, until in His Church " Gathered out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south " (Psalm cvii. 3 P.B.V.) " He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

The " deliciousness " does not lie in any ease of employment, for souls are hardly won and the work is really strenuous, but it comes when one gleam of light and spiritual apprehension shines in a heathen face, and it comes when the " Name of Jesus " suddenly tells of a Saviour's love, when we see " It is manna to hungry souls, and to the weary rest." Then what a delight when " babes in Christ " grow and wax strong in spirit with the grace of God upon them.

It is warfare indeed, but under a Captain Who leads to victory. There are burdens to bear and sometimes heavy ones, but the Lord is our burden-bearer. And it is a privilege to be " workers together with God," with those who may " stand in His Presence, sent to speak . . . to show . . . glad tidings " !

All that such honour demands are lives placed utterly

at His disposal, and hearts upon which He can breathe His love yearnings. These are our Message, these are the words of life, from the heart of the Master to our hearts, from ours to the hearts of others, in spirit to spirit communion. Daily and often through the days, we hear in compelling command, "Speak ye comfortably, saith your God, to the *heart* of My Jerusalem."

There are depths of joy in an "employment" which, as a love-call from the Lover of souls, comes appealingly again and again, "Come, My beloved, let *us* go forth into the field; let *us* lodge in the villages. Let *us* get up early to the vineyards; let *us* see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee My loves."

Marvellous condescension! Resistless appealing, resistless pleading—"There," where I need thee, "There" I will bless thee, "There will I give thee My loves." "There," where I wait to save to the uttermost, while in a love-work with Me, you, as My witness, make Me known; you, as My sent one, tell of My love.

Yes, the "Deliciousness of employment" is in the sweetness of "Loves."

"O most glorious God! . . . give me a hope that shall not fail . . . that, when Thou shalt call me from this deliciousness of employment, I may pass into the employments of saints and angels; whose work it is, with eternal joy and thanksgiving, to sing praises unto Thy mercies.—Amen." (*Jeremy Taylor.*)

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